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ANNIVERSARY
1941 - 1991

Daily Report

Soviet Union

FBIS-SOV-91-060
Thursday
28 March 1991

Daily Report
Soviet Union

FBIS-SOV-91-060 CONTENTS *28 March 1991*

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Staff Officer Ladygin on Disarmament Talks

LD2703172391 Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] An opinion is expressed in the Western media that following the victory of the American troops in the Persian Gulf, the Soviet military are concerned about the level and quality of the arms at their disposal. It is claimed that this explains the inaction by the Soviet military on the treaty to reduce conventional armed forces in Europe, a treaty signed in Paris last November. Our guest speaker is Lieutenant General Fedor Ladygin:

This is an absolutely wrong opinion and an absolutely wrong notion of the stand of the Soviet General Staff on the issue, says the general. The foreign policies of the Soviet leadership have the full support of the General Staff. The chief of the General Staff himself repeatedly headed the disarmament group of the Soviet delegation at meetings of the Soviet and American foreign ministers. During the latest meeting in Moscow he sought a way out of the situation that had developed over the Paris treaty through no fault of ours, said Lieutenant General Fedor Ladygin.

Now it is claimed that the Soviet military concealed part of the armaments and took them from under the treaty's operation by giving them the status of naval arms. Lieutenant General Fedor Ladygin again:

General Ladygin says that the situation is totally different. The armaments of coastal defense and of the marine corps were taken away as a subject of talks on the insistence of the United States even before the talks began. The Soviet Union insisted that naval forces should also be a subject of the talks; however, it was the United States that categorically objected to that and still does. I must note in passing that coastal defense forces were set up in the Soviet Union in 1988 exactly at the time when the mandate for the talks was being (?drafted). It was precisely then that we insisted that all the naval forces including the coastal defense forces and the marine corps should be a subject for the talks. First of all the United States excluded the naval armaments, and now the situation around the treaty is being dramatized. I think the point is not whether to include or not to include these armaments in the Paris treaty; the thing is, apparently, that some forces are not interested in deepening and expanding the disarmament process, and that's the main thing, said General Ladygin.

We offered a pragmatic solution. We won't build up armaments in our coastal defense forces, more than that we are willing to reduce the number of armaments of ground troops—that's tanks, personnel carriers and artillery—by the amount that we have in the coastal defense forces. I think that those who are interested in the treaty must appreciate this radical proposal, the general said.

U.S. Calls for Review of ABM Treaty Cited

PM2503110591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 22 Mar 91 Union Edition p 6

[Report by A. Blinov: "'Desert Storm' Stardust"]

[Text] The U.S. Senator John Warner last week offered an unusual "bonus" to the package of benefits for servicemen who took part in the conflict with Iraq.

Speaking during a discussion of the bill on payments of additional money to servicemen and reservists, J. Warner suggested including in it the text of a resolution demanding a review of one of the most important agreements in the field of international security—the Soviet-U.S. treaty on ABM defense.

The treaty, signed in May 1972, bans the development, testing, and deployment of mobile sea-based, air-based, space-based, and land-based ABM systems. It is a termless document. In accordance with the strictly formulated procedure withdrawal from the treaty is possible only in the event of a direct threat to a country's "supreme national interests." Of course, nothing of the kind stems from the military victory of the anti-Iraqi coalition.

In his speech in the Senate and in his letters to colleagues about the initiative he has undertaken, Warner cited the successful use of the U.S. "Patriot" tactical ABM complex against the Iraqi "Scuds." Now it is the turn of space-based ABM facilities, the senator believes. According to his proposal, the United States must within two years hold talks with the Soviet Union on the review of the restrictions set by the ABM Treaty. If they do not succeed in reaching agreement, then the United States should withdraw from the treaty unilaterally.

The senator not only suggested reviewing an international agreement which has already been in existence for nearly 19 years but also suggested violating it before the expiry of the deadline he himself set. He stated that the Pentagon, without waiting for the results of the talks, should prepare to develop and test the systems banned under the treaty.

J. Warner's references to support from the White House were a surprise to many senators. He reported that Vice President D. Quayle had expressed himself in favor of "restructuring" the treaty. B. Scowcroft, the president's national security aide, allegedly sent a letter saying that this resolution "will serve as an unambiguous signal of our readiness to embark on a strategic defense initiative which strengthens our national security."

Warner's proposal was opposed by many senators—not only Democrats, who are in the majority in the Senate, but also Republicans. Democratic Senator S. Nunn, the leading Senate specialist on military questions, who heads the Armed Services Committee, put forward a counterproposal switching some of the SDI program appropriations toward "Patriot" tactical missile complexes. Republican Senator W. Cohen denounced Warner's proposal as an attempt to "break the law."

It is not surprising that in this situation the signal to back off has been heard from the White House. Spokesmen for the Administration stated that Warner's idea is "untimely," although it accords with the Administration's course. Following this the senator retracted his proposal.

"The failure of the Republicans' initiative," Helen Dwyer, WASHINGTON POST Congressional correspondent, believes, "means at least a temporary setback for the Administration and its allies on the Capitol Hill who are trying to use the success of the war in the interests of achieving their political goals, including space-based ABM defense..." At the same time, in the correspondent's opinion, these attempts will obviously continue.

Senator J. Warner himself is not discouraged, however. He states that he intends to do everything to "persuade middle America" not to leave this question "to the will of a group of supporters of arms control."

U.S. Diplomats Unyielding in Arms Control

LD2203060991 Moscow World Service in English 2300 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] At the recent talks in Moscow involving Secretary of State James Baker, our two nations reaffirmed loyalty to cooperation but failed to achieve progress in arms control. Vladislav Kozyakov explains why.

The Gulf war naturally detracted attention from arms control, but the crisis is over and the key aspect of international politics, this barometer of Soviet-U.S. relations, must win priority once again. All the more so, cooperation between Moscow and Washington to counter Iraqi aggression stood out when the United Nations was adopting its decisions. Washington officials have admitted no victory could be won in the Gulf without Soviet support.

Why then have the talks lost some of their pace to complete a treaty that would cut in half stategic offensive weapons? The Americans claim the differences of interpreting a treaty for conventional arms in Europe keep the administration from sending this treaty to the Senate for ratification and they claim that without ironing out these differences first the United States cannot sign the START treaty either. Paradoxically, at Secretary Baker's Moscow talks, the United States refused to compromise to give the conventional arms treaty the green light. It believes the three Soviet Coast Guards divisions attached to the navy are ground troops liable for cuts. The LOS ANGELES TIMES reported the Soviets had offered to cut in half the number of weapons they want exempt from treaty regulations. American papers also quoted a U.S. official as admiting that this country had made genuine efforts to try and resolve it, but Washington rejected the Soviet compromise proposals all the same.

When the other side at talks refuses to seek agreement through concessions the only feeling this can give is bewilderment. What is the cause of obstinacy? Aren't there any unknown motives behind this? Incidentally questions of this kind regarding the U.S. position are prompted by the current discussions in America. Various programs are considered to build up weapons. Besides the [word indistict] ABM treaty has again become unsuitable at this particular time. With the administration's participation Senator (?Warner's) amendment has been prepared to have talks to reconsider this treaty, a treaty that stands in the way of development of space weapons.

America is making a lot of statements at various levels about its leading role in the world, about a one pole world that came into being after the Gulf war and about the United States to have become the world's only superpower. The WASHINGTON POST claims the White House no longer sees the START treaty as the great symbol of security it seemed in the past. Is the obstinacy of American diplomats to conventional and nuclear arms control talks behind the change of feelings among U.S. policymakers?

United States & Canada

Bovin Assesses Trends in U.S. Relations

PM2703165591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Union Edition p 4

[Article by Aleksandr Bovin: "Political Observer's Opinion:" "Time-Out?"]

[Text] You get the impression that holdups have begun to build up in Soviet-U.S. relations, there has been a perceptible chill, despite the spring, and there has been an increase in the number of questions left unanswered. Most likely, the situation is more fuzzy, more uncertain, and more subtle than my words indicate, but I am not providing a "formula"—I just want to convey a general feeling.

We would not be very mistaken were we to say that Soviet-U.S. relations have withstood the test of the Kuwaiti crisis. By and large Washington and Moscow cleaved to common positions (to repulse the aggressor). They voted in harmony both "for" and "against." But their actual roles were substantially different. The United States, at the head of the anti-Iraq coalition, assumed the main burden and the main responsibility. The USSR, while giving the coalition moral support, restricted its role to a policy of, say, friendly neutrality.

Many Americans—both in the State Department and in the White House—realized perfectly well that they cannot ask more of Moscow in the given specific situation. In their official statements U.S. leaders stressed the community of approaches and positions. But differences in their assessments and emphases showed through these statements. The Americans, massing a vast quantity of troops and arms in Saudi Arabia, to all intents and purposes set course for war and for the routing of Iraq. While people in Moscow thought that it was enough to give Iraq a good fright and force it to retreat and leave Kuwait.

That is all in the past now, but the differences between Washington's and Moscow's positions are being reproduced during the discussion at the UN Security Council of specific problems relating to postcrisis development and when comparing the two approaches to the general balance of forces and interests in the region.

There is nothing overdramatic or overalarming in these differences themselves. They are normal, inevitable business clashes between two partners of global caliber. However, the trouble is that the course of events in the Soviet Union incites and galvanizes those forces in the United States who, to put it mildly, do not sympathize with the Soviet Union and who are striving to kindle, intensify, and exaggerate existing and possible conflicts of interest.

If you look at the Soviet Union through the eyes of an "average" U.S. observer, you get the following picture. A dangerously ailing, weakening giant. Refusal to take medicine based on democratic prescriptions is rendering the situation virtually hopeless. The collapse is both vertical—the old system of management is breaking down—and horizontal—the periphery is moving away from the center. Gorbachev has fallen hostage to conservatives and the forces of yesteryear who are sharply criticizing his "pan-human" approaches to foreign policy and his "pro-U.S." foreign policy course. What about the Yeltsin option? These same observers consider him to have a different level of intellect and different grasp of the essence of politics, and thus, to be less reliable and stable and more dubious in terms of his spur-of-the-moment impulses. The White House is in general being advised to return to the "pre-Malta era" and play a waiting game rather than submitting new initiatives, and be more energetic, despite Moscow's dissatisfaction, in working with the republics. Which is, strictly speaking, what is being done.

The military have an easier task. The annual report on military policy that the Pentagon submitted to the President and the U.S. Congress said: "Come what may, in the security sphere the Soviet Union will still be the only country in the world capable of destroying the United States and the modernization of Soviet strategic nuclear forces is continuing, moreover." In this context the Americans—if nothing out of the ordinary happens—will continue the talks on nuclear and conventional arms cuts at a leisurely pace. The intention is to retain the U.S. advantages in the development of advanced military technologies. The recent blitzkrieg in Kuwait and Iraq showed what this means....

The fact that we can destroy the United States is kind of comforting and encouraging. But since this capability is incompatible with Realpolitik, we are bound to see that our opportunities to maneuver, make and change demands, and trample our partner are extremely limited. The maximum we can aim for is not to slide backward and to hang on to the things that we have already agreed. This does not preclude some steps forward in new areas if we are lucky. We must not under any circumstances descend to petty wiles, engage in deception, or disgrace the state (remember the Krasnoyarsk radar, and now we have the "disguised" divisions).

We want Soviet-U.S. relations to be even and stable. But that does not mean that we have to strive to feverishly leapfrog the pauses in these relations. After all, we, too, sometimes benefit from taking time-out and stopping and thinking. And, not drawing attention to the loud yelling emitted by those people who would like to display their toughness and flex their muscles. All crucial fronts are now within the country. Either perestroyka triumphs—and we create a democratic, open, economically effective society—or we have the inevitable return to the "cold war" and the arms race.

Near East & South Asia

Soviet Kurds Demonstrate Outside Iraqi Embassy

PM2703201691 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 28 Mar 91 p 4

[RIA report: "Incident at the Embassy"]

[Text] A demonstration of Soviet citizens of Kurdish nationality took place outside the Iraqi Embassy in Moscow 26 March.

This was reported at a briefing at the capital's city internal affairs administration. About 40 people took part in the action. The demonstrators unfurled banners reading "Death to Husayn," "Husayn is a fascist," and "Freedom for Kurdistan." Embassy staffers came out into the street, after which demonstrators and diplomats started throwing stones and sticks at each other.

The incident was halted by Moscow militia patrols who arrived on the scene. Eight of the most active demonstrators were arrested.

Soviets Consider Helping Cap Kuwaiti Oil Wells

PM2803101991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 26 Mar 91 Second Edition p 5

[Article by A. Boldinyuk: "'Small Battle' After the War"]

[Excerpts] Day has turned into night in Kuwait—it is as dark at 10 A.M. as it is at 10 P.M. Black clouds from burning oil wells have already blocked out the sky above the country's capital and, judging by the forecasts of Western experts, the situation will scarcely improve this year. The most pessimistic specialists even claim that it will take three years to put the fires out completly. If that is what happens, the planet will be threatened by an unprecedented environmental catastrophe. [passage omitted]

"Many wells have simply been reduced to deep craters gushing oil," V.A. Talday, department chief at the USSR Ministry of the Petroleum and Gas Industry, said. "Putting out the fire is not the ultimate objective, because the discharge of oil could be equally disastrous. The main thing is to choke the supply of oil and seal off the well. Each well requires its own, special capping technique. In some places it will be necessary to sink lateral wells and approach the shaft from the side, as it were. We do have special equipment which makes it possible to deal with powerful sources of fire. But hitherto fire-extinction operations have been carried out at individual sites. Clearly the firefighting operations will require colossal material resources and a large number of firefighters. I would describe the upcoming capping operation as a 'minor war,' although in terms of scale it approaches a major war."

"Is the question of the participation of Soviet specialists in capping the blazing wells in Kuwait under discussion?"

"Yes, we have been approached by a number of foreign companies. Their proposals are now under examination." [passage omitted].

U.S. Opposition to Pakistani Nuclear Plans Viewed

LD2703182991 Moscow World Service in English 0610 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Commentary by Aleksandr Korolev]

[Text] The man in charge of Pakistan's Atomic Energy Commission, Munir Ahmad Khan, in a newspaper interview has said the United States may soften its position on Islamabad's nuclear program now that the Gulf war is over. Mr. Khan's wording is an indication of Islamabad's hope for an early resumption of American aid suspended last eyar. But to what extent can this hope be justified? Commentary is by Aleksandr Korolev:

Official statements of this kind have been made for quite some time. The question is whether they indicate an understandable desire for restoring a special relationship with the United States and a $600 million worth of annual aid that went with it, or a realistic judgement of the postwar situation in the Gulf.

On balance, it seems the desire outweighs all other considerations. Last year's aid withdrawal by the U.S. Congress was caused by suspicions that Islamabad was conducting concealed research to develop its own nuclear weapons. The two main factors which led to the congressional ban are still there. On the one hand, fears are still strong in Congress about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and even the euphoria of the victory of the Gulf war has failed to relieve them. On the contrary, an amassment of arms such as Iraq's can develop into a regional disaster and worse still if President Saddam Husayn has nuclear weapons.

But, on the other hand, Islamabad's own position can hardly help bring a change of heart by U.S. Congress. Apart from verbal reassurances, Pakistan's new government did little to dispel doubts about its nuclear program. Doubts will remain while the country's prime minister, Mr. Nawab Sharif, continues to [word indistinct] access to its nuclear installations by an international team of independent inspectors. It threatened meanwhile that a nuclear plant in Kahut is capable of producing 33 pounds of enriched uranium a year, good enough to make two nuclear bombs.

One other reason why doubts persist is that Islamabad is unwilling to join the Nonproliferation Treaty, even in exchange for U.S. aid. These doubts mount each time exposures are made of renewed Pakistani attempts to buy on the sly any piece of western equipment which can be used to develop nuclear weapons. The LOS ANGELES TIMES said recently that some U.S. officials were now admitting in private they turned a blind eye on Pakistan's nuclear research in the 1980's because it was used for U.S. arms shipments to the Afghan mujahidin.

Things have now changed and U.S. congressmen are less inclined to forego the aid embargo they imposed on themselves until Mr. Bush produces enough evidence saying that Pakistan is not engaged in developing its own nuclear potential.

East Europe

Albanian Official Holds 28 Mar News Conference

LD2803113391 Moscow TASS in English 1027 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Belgrade March 28 TASS—"I guarantee that regardless of the results of the forthcoming legislative elections there will be no military coup," chairman of the Albanian Council of Ministers Fatos Nano told a news conference in Tirana on Wednesday evening.

Addressing numerous foreign reporters who arrived in the Albanian capital to cover the country's first legislative elections on a multi-party basis, the Albanian prime minister said that following the elections "a multi-party parliament, democratic relations and market economy will be created in Albania."

Even if the ruling Albanian Party of Labour has the majority in the new legislature, representatives of the opposition will also participate in a future cabinet, Fatos Nano said.

Complete Withdrawal From CSFR Before 25 Jun

LD2703193491 Moscow World Service in English 1800 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The last remaining 12 Soviet tanks from a total of 1,200 stationed in Czechoslovakia until a complete Soviet withdrawal began last year departed from Soviet Army headquarters 40 km northwest of Prague. General (Setazar Nonovich) in charge of the Czechoslovak Defense Minsitry commission overseeing the pullout said the last armored personnel carriers and artillery pieces were to go on 2 April. The seven transport planes and some 2,700 vehicles will leave by 24 May, a month ahead of the deadline for the withdrawal's completion, (Nonovich) told reporters. More than 87 percent of the Soviet military personnel stationed in Czechoslovakia have already left and the rest will be withdrawn before 25 June, when the protocol of Soviet troops pullout from Czechoslovakia is to be signed.

CSFR Ambassador Meets With Various Officials

PRAVDA Chief Editor Frolov

PM2603140591 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 22 Mar 91 Second Edition p 4

["Own Information" report: "Conversation at the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic Embassy"]

[Text] On 21 March I.T. Frolov, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and chief editor of PRAVDA, had a meeting with R. Slansky, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic ambassador to the Soviet Union. During the friendly conversation they touched on questions of Soviet-Czechoslovak relations, international life, the results of the referendum in the USSR, and also the role of the media in the present-day situation.

I.T. Frolov visited the embassy at R. Slansky's invitation.

Meets Bessmertnykh 22 Mar

LD2303045191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1852 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, 22 Mar (TASS)—USSR Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh met today with Rudolf Slansky, the CSFR'S ambassador to the USSR, at the latter's request. They discussed a broad range of matters concerning the present state of Soviet-Czechoslovak relations and noted a joint interest in the deepening of these relations.

CSFR Deputy Premier, Katushev View Economic Ties

LD2603145591 Prague CTK in English 1410 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 26 (CTK correspondent)—Czechoslovak Deputy Premier Vaclav Vales and Soviet Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Konstantin Katushev noted here today that some of the stumbling blocks of economic cooperation between their countries could be removed by a standing operative mechanism.

The two ministers agreed that the implementation of Czechoslovak-Soviet cooperation agreements is impeded mainly by problems in cooperation between banks. As a result, agreed exchanges of goods based on lists of products in whose imports the two countries are interested are not taking place.

Yesterday, Vales signed an intergovernmental agreement on trade and economic relations and scientific-technological cooperation with the Russian Federation.

Czechoslovak Foreign Trade Minister Jozef Baksay, accompanying Vales to the USSR, told CTK he was satisfied with the Moscow talks. According to Baksay, the two sides have apparently deep interest in fulfilling their commitments.

IZVESTIYA Highlights Treaty With Romania

PM2703162791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 25 Mar 91 Union Edition p 5

[Unattributed report: "Soviet-Romanian Treaty"]

[Text] The Soviet-Romanian Treaty on Cooperation, Good-Neighborliness, and Friendship was initialed in Moscow 22 March during talks between the Soviet and

Romanian ministers of foreign affairs. We cite key excerpts from this document which the editorial office has obtained.

"In their mutual relations and in their international activities the USSR and Romania will treat each other in all circumstances as friendly states.

"They will be guided in their relations by the principles of sovereign equality, mutual renunciation of the use of force or the threat of the use of force, inviolability of borders, territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, noninterference in internal affairs, and respect for human rights....

"The USSR and Romania will not take part in any alliances directed against either party.

"Neither of the contracting parties will allow its territory to be used by a third state to launch an aggression against the other contracting party.

"The USSR and Romania pledge to expand and deepen bilateral cooperation in the sphere of the economy, industry, and trade....

"Business contacts and ties at republic, regional, and local levels will be encouraged in every way, as will various forms of cooperation and direct ties between enterprises....

"The USSR and Romania... will expand and deepen ties between their peoples in the sphere of culture and facilitate their citizens' broad access to the languages and culture of the other party....

"The Government of Romania declares that Soviet military cemeteries and Soviet monuments located on Romanian territory will be preserved and looked after as necessary."

The term of the treaty is 15 years and can be extended. Our diplomatic correspondent was told at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs that it is planned to sign this document during the Soviet-Romanian summit, the date for which remains to be agreed.

Latin America & Caribbean

Economic Relations With Cuba Need Revision

91UF0572A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian No 12, Mar 91 pp 2, 3

[Article by Ye. Gorovaya: "Cuba, Si, Aid, No!"]

[Text] With the collapse of the "socialist camp," primarily in Eastern Europe, we are faced squarely with the question of how to develop relations with those who have remained in this "camp."

Until recently the entire spectrum of the USSR's relations with one of these countries, Cuba, was thoroughly mixed in with ideology. Now on one side—ours—the ideological fetters have fallen away, and the following question has arisen: On what basis to develop relations henceforth?

The position of the Cubans remains purely Marxist: The Soviet Union has betrayed socialist ideals and not only has done nothing to prevent the collapse of the socialist community but is actively promoting this collapse. For this reason criticism of Cuba in the left-wing Soviet press is perceived by the Cubans as a perfectly deliberate venture planned to deprive it of Soviet aid and thereby contribute to the demise of the world's last "bastion of socialism."

Last Bastion of Socialism?

"Even a superpower would do well to have allies"—such "reminders" on the part of Cuban leaders could not be called unreasonable. But allied relations have at all times been built on the basis of mutual interest. In the 1960's-1970's the USSR's ideological interests were perfectly obvious. Cuba was "the first country of the Western Hemisphere to embark on the path of building socialism" and to show thereby the vulnerability of the "bourgeois theory of geographical fatalism."

But granted all the significance of the propaganda aspect of the interests connected with Cuba, more important, for all that, was its role of "unsinkable aircraft carrier" floating only 90 miles from the southern borders of the "main enemy." Cuba always understood full well how important for the USSR its geographical proximity to the United States was. Whence, probably, Cuban leaders' confidence in the permanency of the Soviet aid mechanism. But, times change. The USSR and the United States have abandoned mutual confrontation, and Soviet interest in Cuba as an "unsinkable ally" has declined sharply. But interest in making relations with Cuba economically profitable, on the other hand, has increased. But, this is where differences in terms begin.

Statistics—What You Want To Make of Them...

The term "debt," as distinct from "aid," evokes in Cubans an allergic reaction. "No developing country can pay its debts," R. Viera, first deputy Cuban foreign minister, said last summer even. The Soviet press published Cuba's official total debt to the USSR: R15.5 billion. But this figure reflects only Cuba's debt in respect of official credit extended in rubles. The gratis assistance, the official currency debt, the "hidden" assistance (when the Soviet side pays in dollars, and Cuba reimburses expenditure in transfer rubles) and, of course, military assistance—all these components disappear from the official statistics.

According to Western figures, annual Soviet assistance to Cuba constitutes $5-$7 billion. When a highly competent Cuban representative heard this figure, he commented as follows: "The island could then have been paved with gold." Estimating, however, a more or less realistic amount of annual assistance, in his opinion, the

Cuban concluded that it constitutes "just over $1 billion." If we multiply this by the 30 years of Soviet-Cuban cooperation, we obtain a figure of more than $30 billion.

It is probably simply impossible to arrive at a precise total of Cuba's debt to the Soviet Union—as, equally, of the "aid"—the more so in that this debt has been written off (or "rescheduled") from time to time. Nonetheless, greater accuracy in the estimates would hardly go amiss.

A Crack in the Ice?

"Uncertainty"—this is the term, in the opinion of Rafael Rodriguez, member of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee Politburo and deputy chairman of the republic Council of Ministers, which most accurately reflects the state of Cuban-Soviet relations at the present time.

On the one hand, the Cuban leaders are attempting at all costs to preserve Soviet aid, on the other, to prevent penetration of their home by the "perestroyka contagion." "The Cuban communists who are speaking in support of perestroyka and glasnost," F. Castro declared, "are from the same clique as the dissidents from the ranks of counterrevolutionaries. We do not intend to tolerate this perversion within our party." As far, however, as trade and economic relations are concerned, a certain clarity, possibly, will be introduced by the results of the negotiations between Cuban Foreign Trade Minister R. Cabrisas and K. Katushev, minister of foreign economic relations of the USSR, when the documents signed for 1991 will be officially made public. Spokesmen for the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations are saying for certain only that the reduction in assistance will be "appreciable."

This fact alone testifies to an endeavor to modify the Soviet-Cuban cooperation mechanism: from aid to partnership.

In the past the USSR "buried" its own sugar industry in the name of assistance to its ideological ally—revolutionary Cuba. But today it would be just as unreasonable on account of ideological disagreements with the Cubans to make a 180-degree turn and "bury" long-established economic relations. The more so in that it is not just Cuba that has an interest in them. A halt to the supplies of Cuban sugar, nickel, cobalt concentrate, and citrus fruit would hardly contribute to a recovery of the Soviet market. But it is better to build relations on the basis of the sole reasonable criterion, which has won the approval of world practice—mutual benefit and mutual responsibility.

Panamanian Leader's Proposal on Army, Canal Viewed

PY2603013091 Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Spanish 0200 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Commentary by Aleksey Pavlov]

[Text] Panamanian President Guillermo Endara has proposed to amend the Constitution so that his country would no longer have an army. We have a report by Aleksey Pavlov.

(?Pavlov explains) that Panama's National Defense Forces, consisting of some 16,000 men, were dismantled after the foreign invasion of Panama in December 1989, one result of which was the overthrow of the regime of General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Many of the officers who held key positions in the Defense Forces have been imprisoned since that time. Noriega, the supreme chief of the Defense Forces who was arrested by Yankee soldiers, is being held in a jail in Miami, waiting to be brought to trial on charges of involvement in drug trafficking.

In Panama, a debate has developed on whether there should be an army. As we can see, the current Panamanian president is against the existence of an army. He believes that the police forces are enough for Panama.

In addition, Endara himself wants to be the chief of the police forces. As political observers have put it, neighboring Costa Rica could have been an example for Endara. For decades now, Costa Rica has had no army but has maintained a powerful police force.

The Costa Rican case is obviously a positive example, but it is doubtful that this would be the best solution for Panama. As is known, Costa Rica has neither a two-ocean canal nor Yankee military bases.

In Panama, however, there are more than 10 bases, the presence of which is justified because of the need to protect navigation. This factor—or rather the U.S. claim that Panama is unable to defend navigation—has become a serious obstacle in the negotiations on the fate of the canal, which were originally held by General Torrijos and President Carter.

At that time, the general convinced the United States that the Panamanian Army could do the job. The Torrijos-Carter treaties were signed in 1977. Under the terms of those treaties, the last Yankee soldier will have to leave the canal zone before 1 May 2000. This means the Panamanian military will be in charge of protecting the canal as of that date.

Today Panama has no army, and President Guillermo Endara has proposed to continue to have no army. If that is the case, we can wonder: Who will be in charge of protecting the canal?

Before answering this question, we would like to point out that the problem would not exist if the canal zone were declared a demilitarized, neutral zone—under United Nations control, for example. I do not believe that anyone in Panama has mentioned this possibility.

Who will defend the canal? It seems that this mission will be carried out by those who are doing it now: U.S. troops. Is the current Panamanian president not expecting this?

Yanayev Meets Visiting Mexican Legislators

PM2203155191 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 22 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[TASS report: "Talks Held"]

[Text] On 21 March USSR Vice President G.I. Yanayev received a delegation of the National Congress of the United Mexican States headed by A. Martinez Dominguez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Commission.

In the course of the friendly talks, the Mexican legislators were briefed on the progress of perestroyka processes in the USSR and the substance of the political and socioeconomic transformations.

A wide range of international and regional problems was discussed, and opportunities for further improving multifaceted ties between the Soviet Union and Mexico were examined.

Supreme Soviet

Bessmertnykh on French, Italian Treaties

LD2703162391 Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian 1845 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] The [USSR Supreme Soviet] deputies were fully convinced by the arguments in favor of ratification of the treaty on concord and cooperation between the USSR and the French Republic, and the treaty on friendship and cooperation with the Italian Republic. USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs Bessmertnykh was at the rostrum:

[Begin Bessmertnykh recording] The signing of these treaties is a noteworthy event in the European area of Soviet foreign policy. International practice has taken shape in such a way that political treaties are not concluded between countries belonging to opposed military alliances. What is taking place, therefore, is a sign of the new times. To arrive at such a surprising result it was necessary to cover the difficult path of movement away from senseless confrontation, to begin dismantling its structures, and breaking the chain of psychological stereotypes. This made it possible to begin the process of transferring the new relations into the realities of bilateral accords in their supreme, binding form in intenational law, into treaties signed at the level of heads of state and of government.

New pages in European history are being opened by the Soviet Union, jointly with France and Italy. Each of our countries can be proud of its contribution to modern civilization and to the solution of European and world problems. However, our bilateral accords and our cooperation overall are paticularly important in the present period, when the need for bold, out-of-the-ordinary ideas and for joint efforts is being felt in Europe.

The transition to broad mutual understanding cannot take place mechanically. The best chances here belongs to partners who have a solid relations base, who, even when they were in the system of the coordinates of the cold war were able to create on a bilateral basis common areas of political dialogue and economic, cultural, and scientific links.

I hope that deputies will understand me if out of the whole range of benefits which the treaties in question represent for the national interests of the USSR, I single out such factors as the strengthening of stability in Europe and the lowering of the military component in mutual relations; the full-blooded linking-up of the economy of the Soviet Union and its future market to the world economic system; the use of French and Italian experience in optimizing the processes of perestroyka in the Soviet Union's economy.

Events of recent months also show that under conditions where hotbeds of tension exist at the perimeter of Europe, and where the political geometry is changing in the continent itself, the Soviet- French and the Soviet-Italian treaties fulfil a very important role in constructing stable bilateral partnerships. They have their place in the European infrastructure which is being created. In their military and political content, the treaties with France and Italy cannot be placed in the category of pacts or alliances: It is rather a question of consultative obligations in the event of situations of crisis or some aggravation of the situation arising in Europe. Furthermore, the sides undertake to act in such circumstances as friendly powers, and not as enemies.

The treaties with France and Italy do not only provide a firm legal foundation of and framework for bilateral cooperation, but also presuppose that actions in European and international affairs will be carried out in parallel, both within the framework of the structures common to all, and by way of the Soviet Union becoming involved in authoritative West European organizations—the Council of Europe , the European Community, the Parliamentary Assembly, and so on. There is also another aspect one would like to single out: In the conditions of radical changes underway in Europe and in the world at large—and at home, for us, it is the renewal of the federation—it is important also to ensure one's own interests through bilateral obligations, so as to prevent a weakening of the positive processes, let alone the emergence of new lines of division in Europe.

The treaties signed with the French and the Italians unequivocally bear witness to the intention of the western partners to strengthen cooperation with the USSR and to facilitate our political and economic stabilization. Naturally, this does not preclude, but, on the contrary, it presupposes the development of normal economic, cultural, and humanitarian ties between the European states and the Union republics within the framework of these treaties.

Allow me, to begin with, to dwell in somewhat greater detail on the treaty with France, concluded for 10 years. The relations with this country—a nuclear power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council—have always been of considerable importance for the safeguarding of our national interests. The events of the prewar years and the rich experience of the last quarter of the century have shown that agreement and development of cooperation, and of our ties with Paris reliably make for stabilization of the situation in Europe. On the other hand, disagreements in Soviet- French affairs would only broaden the area for conflict situation and mistrust.

France has indeed become an important partner of ours in the all- European process, something that has been developed in the text of the treaty. As the main content, it enshrines an interaction between both countries in the forming of a new architecture of Europe, turning Europe into an area that is a single entity with a prospect of creating a common European home or, as the French say, the European Confederation. The principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders are also reaffirmed. Recorded in the treaty is a formula for bringing the mechanism of Soviet-French consultations into play in situations that affect the highest interests of both sides. It is a qualitative step forward in our relations with France in the sphere of security, a step that is rather unusual as far as the past is concerned.

Some deputies ask, with good grounds: How can France's obligations that arise from the Soviet-French treaty be inconsistent with its rapprochement with NATO and with the presence of nuclear weapons aimed to deter a potential opponent. I must say that these issues have been discussed, both in connection with the preparations of the treaty and within the framework of the political dialogue with France at the summit level.

Within the Atlantic alliance, the French, on the whole, take an independent stance, not making their actions subordinate to the decisions of the integrated military command. We are working toward starting a dialogue of trust with France on questions concerning the pricniple of military sufficiency, minimum nuclear restraint, and involving the French in talks on strategic disarmament.

The obligation that France has taken upon itself to promote the development of relations between the USSR and West European integrational organizations is important for us: It will undoubtedly facilitate the bringing of the Soviet Union into contact with leading European standards in different spheres, and its access to cooperation structures in different international organizations.

In accordance with the provision in the treaty, according to which France will facilitate the development of our links with the European Community, Paris has made a proposal to the European Community that a new, broad agreement be concluded between the USSR and the communities. Through Soviet-French joint projects we will become involved in international programs covering a wide range of subjects. France has undertaken to assist our steps for the transition of the USSR to a market economy, and in particular to assist in the training of Soviet cadres for that purpose. A major credit amounting to 5 billion frances has also been made available.

The treaty on friendship and cooperation between the USSR and Italy has been concluded for a period of 20 years. Like the Soviet- French document, it, too, is the fruit of the policy of the new thinking. Only recently we were on different sides of a confrontation pased on strength. Equally obvious is the conclusion of the principle of nonaggression, and of mutual obligation that has been fixed in the treaty not to give any military aid whatsoever or any other assistance to an aggressor, although there are certain known reservations connected with membership of alliances.

During the talks, we and the Italians managed to define ways for the further improvement and expansion of channels for cooperation that are characteristic of traditional Soviet-Italian links. These are trade, finance, transport, including road transport, the conversion of military production, and incentives for the creation of industrial economic-free enterprise zones.

Analyzing the practical returns from the treaty signed with Italy, one ought to have in mind the following: Italy has already made available to us a credit amounting to 1 billion Italian lira—that is, about $900 million—and over the next 3-4 years it intends to open additional credit lines to a total sum of around $6 billion. The drawing up of these accords in principle into a bilateral credit agreement is now taking place at full speed. The Italian Government and parliament would never have made such decisions if they were not confident that a sound future lies ahead for Soviet-Italian economic links. And in this context, the significance of the treaty as a long-term factor and a kind of guarantee of the drawing together and coordination fo the economic policy of the two countries is already extremely perceptible.

Comrade deputies! Presenting for ratification two treaties with our major international partners, I would like to concentrate your attention upon a problem that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes can only be solved by joint efforts. It is a question of ensuring that these and other documents, filled with ideas and potential, do not become exhibits in the shop window of the diplomatic art, but work in full measure for the renewal of Soviet society. To some extent the treaties have already begun to work. During the period of the Persian Gulf crisis, a hotline, providing contacts between the Kremlin and the Elysee Palace functioned actively in accordance with the provisions of the document with France. Links were also maintained with the Italian prime minister.

New aspects of mutual understanding have been found. In particular, the Soviet Union is currently representing France's interests, at its request, in Baghdad. Going by the diplomatic yardstick, it is a very high degree of trust. The first resutls of cooperation with France in the issues of transition to a market economy are being appraised positively. However, the problem of checks on the real fulfillment of the treaties, and on the matter of prompting departments to make use of its provisions in the interests of the national economy and effectiveness of foreign economic ties remains very important. It is essential for all of us to act vigorously, making maximal use of the opportunities provided by the treaties for enriching our national experience in various areas of the treasure house of achievements of the French and Italian peoples.

During a debate on the treaties in the Committee on International Affairs, deputies voiced wishes to receive information about the course of the talks and the nature of the foreign policy documents being prepared, not just during the final phase, during their ratification, but as the elaboration progressed. We agree with this. Deputies asked another question: Are we not running ahead, submitting the treaties with France and Italy for ratification before our partners do so? Will not there be delays on their part? Reliable information in our possession consists of the fact that the French and Italians provide for their ratification plans to roughly coincide in time with the examination of these issues by the USSR Supreme Soviet. They are aware of our plans on this score. We are in regular contact with the respective capitals, and the ratification processes in these countries will literally commence over the next few days. Thus there are no grounds for the USSR Supreme Soviet dragging out the ratification of the treaties with France and Italy.

Our ratification of these treaties will, yet again, confirm the consistent nature of the Soviet Union's policy of cooperation with European states. One would like to hope that the members of the USSR Supreme Soviet will ratify the treaties with France and Italy, which are fully in keeping with our state's national interests.

Thank you for your attention. [end recording]

Dzasokhov Comments on Treaties

LD2703175891 Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian 1845 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Remarks by Aleksandr Sergeyevich Dzasokhov, chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet International Affairs Committee, at the USSR Supreme Soviet session in Moscow on 26 March—recorded]

[Text] I would like to stress that the two treaties [with France and Italy] that have been submitted, evidently on the whole and in principle, by virtue of the historic circumstances and the political and other relations between our country and France and Italy are developing in a positive direction.

Nevertheless, I would like to draw the attention of all of us to a number of circumstances. First, why is it considered appropriate to advance the process of ratification with the European states in such serried ranks, so to say? The reason and logic amount to saying that the West European states, of course, follow very attentively the implementation of Soviet foreign policy toward Europe. They are sensitive when USSR's relations with some countries move ahead of relations with a group of other countries. Therefore, I consider our decision to ratify the treaties with France and Italy very timely considering the fact that we proceeded to the ratification of the Soviet-German package of documents.

The second circumstance is that multilateral European structures have arisen—by the way, the addresses of these structures are now many and varied in the political dimension and in the parliamentary and economic ones too—and the state of affairs would be truncated and not fully stable if we did not back up our participation in the multilateral European structures with well considered bilateral agreements. Therefore, from this viewpoint we are moving in the right direction.

Although the two treaties are very similar, they nevertheless have their own particular features. I would like to state with a short commentary on the Soviet-French treaty. Indeed, circumstances have turned out in such a way since the time of President de Gaulle that a high level of cooperation exists permanently between Paris and Moscow regardless of the changes in cabinets of ministers, presidents, and even politial parties in power—a high level of cooperation. Here we can draw a kind of parallel between the Paasikivi - Kekkonen policy and its successors in Finland and what is happening in France. Today, on the eve of the ratification of the Soviet-French treaty I would like to remind you that it was precisely the USSR and France that stood at the sources of the Helsinki process. Today, too, when there is talk about practical steps in the interests of creating an all-European home and a system of European security, which is particularly important, including with regard to our positions with regard to NATO, then here too we sense a high level of cooperation with the French.

On the other hand, in the name of the treaty with Italy there appeared a concept we are familiar with only in cases of concluding such treaties with our allies, in particular with the East European group of countries in the past. The initiative came from the Italian side.

They proposed the idea of introducing this qualitative concept of a treaty of friendship and cooperation. It must be said that the present Italian leadership surpassed its predecessors in stressing consistent support for perestroyka in our country. The most recent statements by the president, prime minister, and the foreign minister, in particular, of the Italian Republic refer in detail to the attendant issues of our internal and international life.

Nevertheless, comrades, as if in response to questions to our foreign minister, I would like to say this: Of course, our views and the views of those states with which we have signed these treaties cannot be equated. There are, of course, serious differences in approach to many issues, particularly regional ones. Therefore, at the political level we consider that the Foreign Ministry, during the implementation of the articles of these treaties, should smooth things out and find compromises and views which are held in common or which are close for successful cooperation in the international arena.

Further, in the International Affairs Committee it was being said with alarm, and not without cause, that we are now actively implementing the ratification process and in this sense concern was expressed lest a situation had arisen in which treaties had been concluded but the articles contained in them—particularly, comrades, those protocols in the trade and economic sphere which are being signed on the basis of these treaties—would remain unimplemented. Here it is appropriate to appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers and to our ministries that act internationally that they fundamentally back up these treaties with practical deeds.

For example, we have signed with France more than 40 trade and economic and scientific-technical agreements. The rates at which they are being implemented leave much to be desired. We have signed 23 documents with Italy. They too get bogged down, and frequently the fault is ours. So here, as has been frequently stressed at the Supreme Soviet session, the monitoring mission of the Supreme Soviet and its committees should be enhanced.

Finally, these treaties, of course, open up greater prospects for parliamentary exchanges, and I would like to express the wish that we should make skilful use of these to ensure that the rostrums of the Italian and French parliaments should allow us to raise those quesitons that are essential to ensure the successful promotion of these two important bilateral documents which are oriented toward the long term.

I call on the members of the Supreme Soviet, taking account of the minister's report and of the considerations which I have expressed, to ratify with great confidence today the treaties presented to you. [The presenter then reports: "After the rapporteur had given brief replies to questions, the deputies voted for the ratification of these legal acts]

Supreme Court and Patent Bills Approved

LD2703174591 Moscow TASS in English 1659 GMT 27 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondents Ivan Ivanov and Vladimir Isachenkov]

[Text] Moscow March 27 TASS—Both chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet today approved the first reading of a USSR Supreme Court bill.

Presenting the bill to deputies, Supreme Court Chairman Yevgeniy Smolentsev emphasised that it clearly delineates the functions of union and republican courts.

"The USSR Supreme Court is called upon to exercise control over application of laws by Union courts and with regard to republican courts only if they invoke union legislation," he said.

It is within the Supreme Court's competence to decide cases involving economic disputes between the union and republics, banning the activity of citizens' associations, including political parties, and trade unions, and the crimes of high-ranking officials.

The two chambers also endorsed an invention bill in the first reading. Chairman of the State Committee for Invention and Discoveries Yuriy Bespalov said the bill was "a foundation for developing a fundamentally new relationship in the field of industrial ownership, and provides an organisational and legal basis for transition to the market economy".

The bill protects an inventor's intellectual rights, granting him the exclusive rights for invention. These rights are formalised by a patent which can be sold or bought. Until now the state had a monopoly right on inventions and discoveries.

On Thursday, the two chambers will hold a joint meeting to discuss a bill on the fundamentals of entrepreneurship in the USSR, as well as the law on the Cabinet of Ministers.

Well-Wishes Extended to RSFSR Congress

LD2803110591 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 0900 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] As you know, comrades, the work of the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet is continuing. Here is our parliamentary correspondent, Olga Vasilenko:

[Begin Vasilenko recording] There is a joint sitting today, but I will begin my report on this joint sitting of the chambers with what happened literally a minute ago, when the morning sitting was coming to an end before the interval. The USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a greeting to the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation and wished it fruitful work. The Union parliament expressed confidence that the deputies will do everything to prevent political passions from pushing into the background the desire to consolidate, to preserve the Union, and to fulfill other good goals. There were 338 deputies voting in favor and just eight against. That was a pleasing moment in this sitting.

What else was there? The Second reading of the law on general principles for citizens' enterprise in the USSR is being discussed.

Of course, the question of the ban on rallies, the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, was raised. The discussion was very pointed and far from pleasing to everybody. I will just list those who took part, because I cannot tell you anything else for lack of time. The following took part: Sobchak, Samarin, Chelyshev, Voblikov, (?Chikhuyev), (?Nikitayev), Komarov, Umalatova, and many, many more. All the same, I believe that this serious anxiety did not develop into any kind of passions. It was decided that the constitutional supervision committee should look at whether that resolution conforms with the law.

In general, the work is proceeding constructively. I will report in subsequent bulletins on how the discussion of that economic law on general principles for citizens' enterprise in the USSR is proceeding. [end recording]

Political & Social

Gorbachev 26 Mar TV Interview

LD2603225191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1930 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Studio interview with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev by Leonid Petrovich Kravchenko, president of the All-Union Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, and political observer Igor Sergeyevich Fesunenko in Moscow—live or recorded]

[Text] [Kravchenko] Good evening dear comrade television viewers. Today, USSR President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev is our guest, the guest of the All-Union Television and Radio Broadcasting Company. Together with political observer Igor Sergeyevich Fesunenko, we asked Mikhail Sergeyevich to answer a few questions. The situation in the country has become extremely acute: the social and economic situation in the country has deteriorated; interethnic quarrels have intensified in a number of regions; unfortunately, lately the strike movement has been growing; and to add to these, in a few days a rise in retail prices is expected. People are worried and nervous; some people have lost confidence in the future. The nationwide referendum was held recently against such a complicated background. I would say that the question of historical importance was decided: Should there be or not be the USSR? How do you assess the results of the referendum?

[Gorbachev] You were right when you said that the all-Union referendum took place under a very complicated situation, at a very important stage of the development of our society when, in implementing the course aimed toward perestroyka, we reached an acute phase. On one hand, there are deep changes taking place that are essential to improve the health of our society, to gain a second wind, and to enter into new forms of life. This refers to the economy as well as to politics, the spiritual sphere, the sphere of interethnic relations, and the whole of our society. One can, of course, always presuppose and forecast worry, concern, hesitation, discussions—sometimes heated ones—and conflicts in any society at this stage. All these are taking place in our country, as well. Moreover, these deep processes are taking place not in a simple society, but the one which is overloaded with problems, in the society which has decided to take a path of profound changes. It was in this atmosphere that the referendum took place.

You recall how this question of the referendum arose. At a certain stage, we all saw that, if in this society in which we live and in which so many people live, a formula is not found to renew the multinational state, it will be difficult to resolve all the problems. At the same time, when we understood this, and this problem moved to the focus of the public opinion—in fact, it occupied the entire society—a lot of proposals arose on ways for transforming this multinational state and what it should be like. This also turned out to be a very difficult and responsible matter. This is our destiny. I had an idea then, and when considering it, I became profoundly convinced that the people, the country's peoples, must say its word, the decisive word, on this question, the main question, because, on one hand, one view on the future of our state is being supported by references to the people's opinions, to its wishes, its general state, its national dignity, and its aspirations. On the other hand, there is an opposite view, and, again, a reference to the people's opinion is being presented as proof.

In general, I already saw that in such a vast matter it was necessary to introduce clarity. It was precisely then that I came to the opinion and, having consulted my colleagues in the leadership, with many deputies, with representatives of the intelligentsia, I came to the conclusion that I should use my powers as president and ask this question of the Congress of People's Deputies, using my constitutional powers.

[Fesunenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, the referendum, as a whole, was successful. This is indisputable, and this is talked about in our country and abroad. Nevertheless, let us not close our eyes to the fact that six republics did not participate in the referendum. They are the Baltic republics, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia. Incidentally, the leaders of these republics occupied a frankly confrontational position on the question of whether they should or should not be within the composition of our country and frankly state their wish—at least Georgia and the Baltic republics—to secede from the USSR. How does this situation correlate with the referendum results?

[Gorbachev] Well, I will continue. I would like to complete my reply to the first question, and it will, indeed, move over toward a reply to your question. I also highly appraise the referendum results. Despite all the forecasts, the people came out for this referendum. There were 80 percent of potential votes, registered voters, and 76 percent of them said yes to a renewed union as a renewed federation of sovereign republics. I must say that this is of immense significance, and not just in the context of solving the problems of the Union itself and what form it will take, as the question was put, but this is of immense significance. We, all of us, as it were, felt firm ground beneath. We all felt that this Union is a supremely priceless thing that we need today and tomorrow. Everybody recognized the fact that we will be able to deal with and solve the problems that face us only by working together. If you consider the fact that, at the same time, prior to the referendum, or rather, the day before the referendum, the draft of the new Union treaty, which was prepared by the republics and examined by the Federation Council, was published, and the people were able to see the shape of the future union, then they, as it were, by voting for and positively supporting and speaking in favor of preserving the Union had already approved this draft Union treaty. In other words, you understand that we obtained a result of great significance, and the fact that the situation about which you spoke, Leonid Petrovich, is acute, it seems that it would have been possible to expect anything, even some kind of a political risk. No, I think that this once again shows, speaks about, the maturity of our people; when they put aside today's problems and today's difficulties, when they rise above all this and define their position on the main question. From this view, the outcome of the referendum is immense.

And now for your question. Yes, the referendum was not held in several republics. This reflects our realities today, but I have to say that in these republics, in the majority of them, nonetheless, people, overcoming the impediments, all of the obstacles that were put in their way, they, nonetheless, wanted to participate, and responding to precisely those wishes, the USSR Supreme Soviet created certain prerequisites for this. In Moldavia, some 850,000 participated in the referendum; half a million each in Lithuania and Latvia; and 250,000 in Estonia. In Abkhaziya, the majority of the people participated in the referendum and spoke out for preserving the Union...

[Fesunenko, interrupting] Despite the open opposition of the governments of those republics.

[Gorbachev] Not simply opposition, but even simply, even...[changes thought] sometimes it took the form of some kind of force, the exertion of a kind of influence. That is what the referendum showed. It is an enormous result, and a new situation is created, as a result, there is a new situation. Now, we must move toward a Union treaty.

[Fesunenko] Quite right.

[Gorbachev] I will complete my answer: It seems to me that this entire process must accelerate.

[Fesunenko] And those republics that demonstratively refused to participate in the referendum—well, at least the three Baltic republics—does the result of the referendum mean, from your view, that they don't have the right at all, in principle, ever to leave the USSR?

[Gorbachev] No. You know, I look at this process all the same, in the following way: The fact that these republics remained beyond the bounds of the referendum does not mean that they have already automatically left the Soviet Union. I think that the signing of a Union treaty by those republics which expressed a positive attitude, in which the people expressed themselves in favor of preserving the Union, will, at the same time, also signify the start of the process for the remaining republics. For this, we have constitutional provisions: There is a law, and there is a mechanism. There cannot be any kind of automatic departure, and I think we all understand this. Why? This is why a law was adopted which specified the mechanism for leaving the Soviet Union.

In other words, each people has a constitutional right for this; there is a mechanism for this.

[Kravchenko] Five years.

[Gorbachev] But, there are the problems of the people, the human problem. In all our republics, people of different nationalities are living. What is their fate? This should be decided, and they should think, they should make their choice. There are questions of defense, questions of property, many other questions. This is a very complicated process. I, generally speaking, have said this several times and would like to say it again here: When I think of what choice we should make, and while approaching this from different angles, I always come to the same conclusion, namely that one should not look for happiness elsewhere, somewhere. I think that those who are pushing the republics, the people, to secession are pushing these people onto a very dangerous path, and I would like to repeat this today.

And, vice versa, now that we will be reforming our multinational state, creating a union of the sovereign republics, a new federation, where there will be strong republics as well as a strong center, this will enable us to solve all the problems, to remove all the questions accumulated during all the preceeding years or decades; here, I see a real way. At the same time, we will be preserving all the advantages of the union, of joining together the efforts of all; here, I think, is the truth of the matter.

[Fesunenko] In short, to reach this aim we should probably begin the gradual process of finalizing the draft and signing the Union treaty. How do you see the mechanism of signing the Union treaty? Can one expect any concrete results in the near future?

[Kravchenko] As a supplementary, Mikhail Sergeyevich, there is one more tendency that has manifested itself, along the lines of: well, we are for the economic union and the single economic space, but, politically, we will see. Can both be compatible?

[Gorbachev] Regarding the mechanism of signing and the way this process should look, I think the republics and the Federation Council will determine this through their interaction while working out this mechanism. I do not want to dictate anything beforehand, I only wanted to discuss this. But now we will transfer this process to the Supreme Soviets. All the Supreme Soviets have the draft Union treaty. This is the draft—I am repeating myself—that the republics have prepared with the participation of the experts and the representatives from the center.

Now, many Supreme Soviets' commissions are studying the document. I think that, considering this draft has travelled this road, that it is the result of work by the republics themselves, and because it has been approved—and I don't see this any other way, the referendum results, at the referendum itself—we can already come up with a document which could be produced for signing possibly some time in April or May.

[Kravchenko, laughing] That's optimistic.

[Gorbachev] In May, that's right, indeed. After all, the work has now been going on for months and I think people are even going to hurry us on. They have had their say, they know the document, and now the supreme soviets have to do some work, to carry out the finishing work. Then, there will probably be plenipotentiary representatives from the republics. This, too, is obvious, to my mind. They, within the Federation Council or in another form, will find an opportunity to go back one more time, compare their positions, and come up with a ready document. In any case, I see it possible in the immediate future to reach the initialling stage, and that, in itself, is very important. Then, it will be possible, as if to proceed from these provisions and act further, to go further along this road.

Now, to your question: Indeed, this kind of topic is being slipped in—let's have an economic union. But, I should say that the feelings in society have been manifested at the referendum, and the ones that prevail are for preserving the union, equally as a political and economic union. I think—and there should be no illusions here—that, of course, the union, the new union, and those republics which will join in and sign the treaty, they are going to build intraunion relations. It's a single state, a union state, but still a single state. The republics which find themselves outside, and will—this will be followed by some kind of process, probably of a few years' duration—but they will then build relations with the union on the basis of international relations, interstate relations.

[Fesunenko] And only on them.

[Gorbachev] And all the advantages of relationships within will already be lost for these. It is perfectly clear. That is to say, we will be building relations, and I think we will be in the union, and that is why I say we, within the union, will be building the relations with these republics as with other states. That is why I think that my view will prevail in the end.

[Kravchenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, the key question in this process is, however, the position of Russia, of the Russian leadership, especially regarding working out and signing a new union treaty. For the time being, and to be frank, we all too often witness an inconsistent and contradictory position of the Russian leadership concerning fundamental questions of the economy and politics alike. Time and again opposition is revealed to the president, the center—the government and the USSR Supreme Soviet alike—and, at times, to all of them all at once, and an impasse situation emerges, as it were. It is difficult, almost impossible, to build a new union of this kind without Russia. What way out do you envisage here, from this, generally speaking, almost impasse situation?

[Gorbachev] I think, you know, that a way out has now been found and there is no need for me to search for it. What you are talking about does take place; moreover, it is being done under the banner of defending the Russian interest against the diktat of the center. Here, it is often precisely the case that it is not the union or union bodies but the center that is being mentioned as being something mythical and diabolical, something against which a struggle must be waged. But, after all, despite all the shortcomings and despite all the imperfections, the center today is formed by the Union republics, by the representatives of Union republics, through the highest bodies, the legislative bodies. This process will be all the more democratic in the future and the positions of republics will gain in strength even more. That is why I think that this constant position of accusing the center is no longer directed so much at the past as at the present, and it disguises a design which bears witness to the fact that not everyone in Russia's leadership shares the position of preserving the union as a federation, but the people came out in favor of that. That is why the will of the people is now of decisive significance, for all republics in the union, the ones that participated in the referendum, and for the Russian leadership alike. The Russians came out in favor of union.

The leaders of Russia should bow to this and should proceed from this, from this political reality, and thus the main obstacle is removed. The union will live and Russia's role within it at the new stage will be no less than it has been over the preceding decades and centuries.

This is, all the same, a peculiar feature of our multinational state, how it took shape in historical terms, that is, how this role took shape in historical terms, and I think that this role will develop even more constructively in the present very important stage of our federation's renewal.

[Kravchenko] Well, so to speak...

[Gorbachev, interrupting] I don't see an impasse, Leonid Petrovich. This...

[Kravchenko, interrupting] We also want to be more optimistic...

[Gorbachev, interrupting] Yes...

[Kravchenko, interrupting] And so, the day after tomorrow, the extraordinary, special congress of Russia's people's deputies opens. There will probably be sharp discussion. It would be interesting to know what expectations you yourself connect with the holding and the possible results of the work of this congress.

[Gorbachev] I attach great significance to this congress. It has ripened out of the Russian situation itself and, in general, out of the situation in the country, since what happens in Russia always has an effect one way or another on the entire situation in the Union. And, therefore, the fact that the deputies came to the point where it was essential to hold an extraordinary Russian congress, this, I think, is a well-thought-through and very responsible decision. Processes should not be left in such a state and the situation in the leadership, in the Russian Federation...[changes thought] and I think that the agenda which was forwarded, formulated, in a preliminary form, by the Russian Federation's Supreme Soviet make it possible to discuss the entire situation from the principled positions. All the same, I think that what will be discussed is the assessment of the political line. You see, all this is the main thing. What is the political line? The fact that they are trying here, both in the mass news media and in other cases, to reduce things to saying that the congress must in general resolve some personal question is, I think, an over simplification. What is at issue is the political line. The situation must be appraised. The political line must be formulated. Guarantees must be secured that this line will be conducted consistently in the interests of the Russian people and in the interests of our multinational state.

I think that this is a very responsible stage, very responsible. But, I hope that all this will happen so that we will have progress as a result.

[Fesunenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, now there are voices which we are hearing ever more frequently and ever more loudly on the total crisis in our country—the total crisis so to speak—the crisis in the whole economy, in the political and social spheres. They talk about the crisis of power. The opposition is frankly and persistently asserting that neither the government nor even the president has any program for dealing with the crisis. In other words, the state is like a ship without a helm and sails in the stormy sea of this crisis. Is this so? What do you think of such critical remarks?

[Gorbachev] I think that these are the typical opposition statements because there is a program of reforming our economy on the basis of reforming the property relations, of creating a mixed economy and the market to activate the powerful incentives for work, for economic enterprise and, thus, arrive at different economic results. This will have an effect on the social situation in the country and the living conditions of the Soviet people. This is first. There is the program of reforming our federation, which we were just talking about. This, too, is a very serious area of perestroyka. Finally, there is the program of political reform which we are undertaking and which includes creating the presidential power, the renewal of the soviets' powers, developing their potentials, the distribution of functions between the legislative and executive powers. There is a whole series of documents adopted to stimulate the democratic processes. As a result, we are dealing with political pluralism, the real development of these political processes in the country. We are moving toward the law-governed state and, in this respect, the steps were taken and, I think, will continue to be taken. We can now talk about the serious processes in the cultural, spiritual sphere.

It is quite another matter that we are moving from one set of forms of life toward another. This has an effect on us all, on our way of life, our way of thinking, our psychological makeup, upon all of us.

We all have to change, change in relations with one another and in all forms of life of this society. After all, in a state with a population of 300 million, hundreds of nationalities, and such a dramatic history, it is not that easy just to come and do it all easily. I think that is why the program and the main directions which were worked out in the course of perestroyka are being enriched, corrected, this is being retained, the course and its main components are being retained.

I think it is a question—and you are right here—of a crisis situation and also very serious tension in the society, connected with the situation in the market, connected with the situation in the economy when economic links are being broken. There is a real threat of losing work, of a fall in production, and all of these things are going to affect the incomes, the budget, the whole situation, the entire social situation. That, I think, is the question, and here our people's demands and expectations, especially after the referendum, are justified.

As well as that, within that program extending over many years for reforming our society, it has become necessary to have a crisis management program. We have already started to shape the components of this program at the latest congress. Within the demands of the congress the economic agreement between the republics, the food agreement between the republics appeared. We have reached the reform of the entire system of prices, including retail prices. I think we could also talk about other steps, but I would now like to get a bit more specific. Today, the people are worried about how things are going with the economy. I think, today, this is very important—to restore the economic links broken by these processes which have disintegrated and breached the normal functioning of the society. Here, too, there is no need to try to be clever. We have an economic agreement and we have to follow it and fulfill the obligations the republics have taken on themselves. And furthermore, we have to lift all the bans which exist equally in republics and in regions, bans which make it impossible for enterprises to establish and maintain normal economic relations. All of this should now be removed. This should be done by the Supreme Soviets and the governments of the republics.

[Kravchenko] For them national borders do not exist. This is the market.

[Gorbachev] Absolutely! Further, all the republics were in favor of some sort of mechanism, functioning on a constant and regular basis, and subordinate to the cabinet, working on these links. Now, such a mechanism has been created. It is headed by Comrade Doguzhiyev, first deputy prime minister. The members of this active body are the first deputy chairmen of the Councils of Ministers of the republics. They have carried out a vast amount of work and it must be said that they have found ways of preventing the further destruction of economic links and slumps in production.

But the situation here has been made more complicated by the position in our coal industry, the position of the miners. But I think the fact that some sort of contact is now taking place and that understanding is arising will permit us to halt this destructive process. Everyone hopes that our miners understand this.

I have information that allows me to say that in the next few days we shall be able to get the situation back on track. Commissions are already at work in all the coal mining regions. And at the beginning of April—right at the very start of April, perhaps 2 April—these questions will be discussed in the Cabinet of Ministers with plenipotentiary representatives of the miners collectives of the coal basins and then with the president.

I think that we shall be able to resolve these questions.

That is what concerns economic links. To move on: The market. I think that here we have an action plan to increase the volume of goods and an action plan to tie up hot money. And our price reform will work toward this, too. Finally, I think that there is understanding in society that we should make subordinate to questions of the economy and to ways of stabilizing it all these rally-inspired passions and battles and that we should stop all that.

At the Supreme Soviet—I do not know how the debate there today will end, but deputies there have put forward a proposal to bring in a moratorium on strikes for the next few months. I welcome this responsible position adopted by the Supreme Soviet. I think that all citizens of our country will support this position.

Now, we must take the situation in hand. People have a right to expect that we must resolutely lead the matter toward normalizing the conflict situation in interethnic relations and toward strengthening law and order. That is this anticrisis program; I would call it the minimum program; it is already being implemented, as well as it is being further worked on, considering present specific conditions, and it will be submitted to prime ministers and the USSR Supreme Soviet at the beginning of April.

[Fesunenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, in 1985 you started perestroyka. I speak openly, for the entire people: You are the forefather, the initiator, and the person who gave the first push and who was the first to strike the ball. Perhaps this is a bold comparison. Well?

[Gorbachev] For you, it is [words indistinct].

[Fesunenko] For me, it is even more so, because in my time I used to write about soccer. Six years have passed since; it is, all in all, a long period. Let us recall how many hopes there were then, how many wonderful expectations there were, how many plans the country had, as a whole, and everyone of us. Generally, much of it came true, especially in the political sphere, where sweeping reforms have been carried out. We still mark time in the economy. In some areas, we take a step or two backward. I want to invite you to do some sort of an excursion into history: Let us suppose that you yet again find yourself in 1985 and could start everything afresh, considering this experience. What would you do in the way you have been doing so far, and what or where would you act differently?

[Gorbachev] Yes, the question is not simple for me, I will say this frankly. I would all the same have repeated this choice in the main. When, today, some people say that Gorbachev still wants more power and that he is impressed by dictatorial and imperial manners, I would like to say: If I again found myself in this situation, I would have made this choice again, for one. The only reason society could no longer live the way it did and develop normally, was the kind of processes that were under way in it. In fact, we can talk about society dying down. This applied to the political process as well as the ideological sphere, the spiritual and cultural development, and the economy. There were the most dangerous processes, and we managed to patch holes thanks to market forces, the world demand for oil, the market-determined oil prices, thanks to the growth of resources which were close at hand and which could be easily, relatively easily, brought into play; labor resources were increasing; and the production of vodka was also going up, and for which profits were received; they increased by 1 billion.

This is how we lived, how we were doing things. The smallest dissent was viewed as a crime; the amount of problems we had in interethnic relations; generally, a radical change was needed in the whole way of life. This is why, in the main, I would have repeated the same thing again. As for the tactics, probably, I should have first of all thought and should have been concerned about the main thing: not to renounce what is still working without having created new, more efficient forms of life and the mechanisms of action. This disparity in approaches, the absence of synchronization in the political, economic, interethnic processes, resulted in us being often unprepared, behind and in other cases, ahead and setting off such processes as a result of which we would find ourselves in difficult situations. Therefore, in the tactical aspect, I would try to avoid those miscalculations which we have made. I have to say this today because the conversation concerns very serious topics. I am not trying to avoid responsibility. Not only for everything that was achieved during perestroyka and the development of the democratic processes; for giving people freedom; for getting underway an active, peace-loving and assertive foreign policy within the framework of the new thinking. All this is an enormous achievement; all this must be done and carried out. But I also see that we could have reached our present status with fewer losses. First, I do not think about myself; I think about the hardships in which our society, our people, have found themselves. I feel this very deeply.

This, for me, is the main question. I have no bigger concerns other than to bring it all to completion. But nor do I see the possibility, thinking it over a thousand times, of responding to those calls that we must go back. This is a mistake, a delusion.

[Fesunenko] Categorically?

[Gorbachev] Categorically. There is no way back. We must stabilize the economy, the political process, the situation in the country and continue with the changes and with the development of all the processes within the framework of democracy. But democracy also presupposes that authority should be firm and should function effectively. Representatives of the German press asked me recently, and they wanted to say that a departure from a totalitarian system is linked with the fact that we must pass through a stage of authoritarianism. This means giving up democracy and does not mean that we have already reached this stage. No.

[Fesunenko] Many people are writing about this in our country, in the papers, too, incidentally. They are even recalling Pinochet.

[Gorbachev] I am paying attention to this. Many arguments—and useful ones, too—are put forward. No, I think, you know, that democracy is doomed if authority is ineffective and weak and not backed up by firm legislation and law and order. That is not democracy. It is chaos, and this is precisely what we are experiencing at the moment. But in our country the causes of this have proved to a considerable extent to be connected not with the fact that we made mistakes in developing the democratic process. No, it is connected with the shortcomings and the blunders committed in the reorganization and reformation of our federation. That is where the key lies. The war of laws and of sovereignties introduced destructive elements and this had an affect on the functioning of executive power, and, in this way, cast a shadow on our democratic processes.

No, we must do everything to ensure that power is effective and firm, and this will at the same time be a continuation—a preservation—and a continuation of the democratic changes.

[Fesunenko] Are you not afraid that in this event accusations will again be heard that you are striving for dictatorship?

[Kravchenko] Incidentally, some people have been making accusations about what they say as lacking consistency, even an indecisiveness in the adoption of some important steps made essential by the situation in society itself. On the other hand, we have noted—journalists see and feel this with particular keenness—that as soon as you, as president, begin to take firm steps within the framework of the Constitution and the laws, the recent decrees, and not just decrees—we immediately begin to hear in the so-called democratic press these voices: Gorbachev is moving to the right. Incidentally, this is already being taken up in the West—this is a move toward dictatorship—and we notice this, and something does not add up.

[Gorbachev] Yes, it is just that you have forgotten to remind me, but I know this, I am simply adding, as it were, to this general picture, that there is also a lot that is being said about the president's weakness and indecisiveness. Some people also prefer this line and it is being peddled. All this does, indeed, exist. I cannot say that on this score I am devoid of emotions and reflections or that I fail to react to this situation. No, I have thought it all over. You know, I cannot agree with any of these extreme views, I cannot accept them. This sustains my position. Incidentally, it also sustains the way I feel and my confidence. Listen, how much...[changes thought] we have embarked on a stage of revolutionary transformations. This is accompanied by the fact that we are impinging upon vital interests and those that are dissatisfied are coming forward too. Nevertheless, I can see that what we are doing and what we will have to do suits an enormous mass and, in the final analysis, everyone, everyone. So it is necessary to endeavor to carry out these deep transformations within the framework of democracy and civic consensus, maybe for the first time in the history of this state. Must we again have the reds and the whites? Must we again have what was being done in 1937 or even earlier? Must you again be my enemy if you disagree and if your viewpoint is different? Moreover, if the enemy fails to surrender, he is wiped out. Are we, again, to tackle these problems in this way, or what? I take to heart the fact that within the framework of the in-depth transformations we could not have done without losses, without dramas; people's blood was shed, now here, now there. These, I think, are the gravest facts of perestroyka. All the same, things have not reached the point of a civil split, of confrontation between the sides.

But all this so far has been continuing within a democratic framework. And to preserve and to reach the objectives we have set ourselves, on the basis of accord, cooperation, even while competing in terms of programs, manner of action, initiative, enterprise, by comparing drafts, opinions. All of this is normal. We have to get there and create this political ethic which is based on a multitude of opinions, on freedom of views on any issue, and to assimilate that which should drive progress within society. Ultimately, let this or that social force or political party prove its case, the practicality and attraction of its programs, and thereby win the people's trust, form the government, and act, pursue that political line.

This is what we need. But if you disagree with that political line, it does not mean you are my enemy. We all are citizens of this country. That is why the political center uses as the basis democratic values and social justice. The policies of the center are directed toward the main body of the people, toward their interests, fundamental interests and those are the policies we should be pursuing. And I should say that it should include all the best active forces both from the right and the left; it should exclude adventurers and reactionaries, both from the right and the left. That is why this is a powerful movement, a popular movement. That is how I see the political center.

I think that in the end we shall get to this political ethic which will allow us to continue to solve things peacefully, in democratic forms, on the basis of the law, and not on the basis of suppression and especially not destruction or violence. I can tell you that if we get to that, I shall consider all my work and everything I have started to be futile. That would be my political death. I do not think we will get to that. All in all, commonsense and wisdom are strong within our people. The referendum has shown this. I found this very encouraging. Eventually, everything will be set on its feet, will return to its normal track and we shall proceed to implement the political course which we outlined in April, 1985.

[Fesunenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, speaking about implementing policy, any political leader, in order to achieve the set objective, must, of course, have a strong team. In the United States there is the president's kitchen cabinet. These are not exactly some sort of high-ranking officials of the state apparatus. These people may, perhaps, have no state post but these are people whom, so to say, the president trusts, whose opinion he values, whom he consults, and so on. You also, especially at the first stage of perestroyka, had a large group of like-minded people. They were people who were quite well known in the country. But, in recent times—let's look truth squarely in the eye—one hears reproaches to the effect that you are losing the like-minded people, and several people from your team, quite well-known ones, did not simply walk out but are already criticizing you. I would now like to know, in the first place, what you think of that—the fact that you are being deserted by many of those who started perestroyka with you. In the second place, are you now putting together some team of reliable like-minded people, on which it is possible to lean?

[Gorbachev] The question is put frankly. I will answer frankly. In general, I am a supporter of honest politics and honest positions. Well, first of all, you know, nevertheless, the question of a team is such a dialectical question. If you recall how perestroyka began, and you recall the team, it is practically the old Politburo that started it, strange though it may seem. It simply had nowhere to go. It had to choose...

[Fesunenko, interrupting] Who am I to ask about how much pressure you put on them?

[Gorbachev] Well...[hesitates] No, there were healthy, as it were, sensible positions, and they had to reckon with the realities. But it gradually came to be renewed and then was virtually replaced. Now I am the only one left, generally speaking.

[Fesunenko] Of that team?

[Gorbachev] Of that team. But, therefore, to say that immediately somewhere a team was gathered together and formed, and that then it deserted, or I rejected it, probably such a view would be a great simplification. It is a process of transition from one composition of leaders to another, within the framework of the tasks that arose and within the framework of the democratic processes that were in motion in both the party and the state.

And here already life itself was at work, and, as it were, the processes of democracy, the mechanisms of democracy were operating. They were discovering and advancing other people. And many of them, either directly in my circle or alongside, entered that movement that we call perestroyka, and contributed much, and still are. You know, perhaps we are now passing through a critical stage, and the question has arisen once again, just as it did before: What is wrong with us? Where are we? Where are we going? Toward what sort of society? What are we giving up? And discussions arise here too.

And then it is necessary to say and add: The situation today is so tense that the leadership will soon be bringing in reinforcements. They are those who link their destiny at this time. They are courageous people. Now, on the contrary, people want, somehow, you know, to be a bit further away.

[Fesunenko] In research, or somewhere else?

[Gorbachev] Well, again in research or, better still, abroad, and to observe from the sidelines. But that is on the one hand. On the other hand, there is such tension, such fever, such searching, and such sharp discussions. The workloads are enormous. This is accompanied by enormous loads. Not everyone can bear them. And some simply leave not because they have betrayed...[pauses] They simply cannot manage it. I would say that, perhaps with the exception of one or two people with whom I parted company over matters of principle, all the rest, even having found themselves in a different position, are working and cooperating with me and providing enormous help. We retain comradely relations. I meet with them regularly. And others become advisers. The position has, as it were, changed. The situation has changed, and the relationships. But I cannot say that there has been a collapse of the Gorbachev team, that people have abandoned it and run off, and that the reason must be sought, as it were, in that, perhaps, Gorbachev has changed. No, I think that a natural process is taking place. People are drawn in and advanced by life. I think that the process will grow.

[Kravchenko] Mikhail Sergeyevich, we are having a very frank talk today, and it is probably necessary to admit that today we are the witnesses of an open political struggle for power within the country. Certain forces no longer conceal their true aims. They have discarded their masks. Their aims are as follows: To remove from power the current presidential structures, to disband the USSR Supreme Soviet, to dissolve the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, and to replace the existing state and political system. I am not making anything up. It is already written in certain programs. The opposition is not fussy over its choice of means. Rallies and the strike movement are used. Even miners' collectives have had well-known political slogans foisted upon them. The powerful workers' movement is seen as a potential force, which may be directed also as a destructive force. There is speculation on the social and economic difficulties within the country, and populism has very often begun to be used as a weapon. And what can be set against this pressure? Is our state power not passive?

[Gorbachev] Well, perhaps the question you are asking is the most important one today, and a suitable reply must be given, taking account of its importance. All this is taking place. You know, I am not inclined to underestimate the danger; although, I must say, what the opposition has so far been offering the public contains nothing of substance which I, too, would be ready to take up as president. If serious things are being offered by the opposition, which could settle some or other issues...[pauses] But apart from certain particular things, in general, the opposition has no constructive program, and from this point of view the opposition cannot compete with us. Where is the danger? The danger is in the fact that the opposition wants to make use of the acute situation in the country, the social tension, the difficulties with the market, with work, and thus to incite people to unforeseen...or rather to actions with unforeseen consequences. This is the most serious danger.

The opposition has at its disposal every opportunity to set out its reasoning and produce its arguments at congresses and in Supreme Soviets, and to address the people. A considerable proportion of our press—if not the greater part of it—is used, is at the disposal of the opposition forces, or at any rate, they set out their position in dozens or hundreds of papers, and they are able to set it out. But, as I have already said, their positions do not provide the answers, or a way out of the situation.

So, they see the hopelessness of this. They resort to other actions. That is why they now are also in such a rush. After all, it must be said frankly that where the opposition forces have found themselves in power, they have also shown that they do not possess the required competence or capability of managing processes. Rallies, slogans, and scathing phrases are one thing; it is quite another to organize the life of society, the more so given the crucial stage we are at, when vital tasks of the day need to be resolved and, at the same time, prerequisites created for renewing society, and for society to be moved along the path of reform. This is a most complicated process, and since they are succeeding neither in proposing a program for society which it would adopt, nor in proving their capability of effectively using the power which they have received—in many places, by the way, this is leading them to such haste—people see all this. They want to take advantage; the situation is tense, and prices here add even more to this; and there are conflicts; and thus, society is provoked.

After all, here one needs to sink to such a degree of irresponsibility, via Moskovskiy Komsomolets, to invite, appeal to students: What are you thinking about, students, young people? Why are you silent and sitting around? Come out! Let's try the Romanian variant! Let's try the Czech variant! Let's try another variant!

That is to say, they have clearly taken the path of instigation and are drawing the working class into this, too, making use of our blunders, the fact that some problems have not been resolved. Here, one must be frank. But, this is not how one should treat society, particularly when it is at such a very crucial stage. This shows it once again, and people must see with whom they are dealing.

I am confident of what we are doing within the framework of this course, of what we are doing today within the framework of the anticrisis program—and here, we will step up efforts—and that people will retain their self-restraint and will not give in to these instigatory appeals, and that the authorities will not permit chaos to take over here.

Ultimately, those who instigate and provoke these disorders and want to raise, to overthrow, to go against the Constitution, should have to deal with those who will stand guard over constitutional observances. I am convinced that we have enormous possibilities at our disposal. First, there is our people's common sense. They understand that, now, as never before, we have to manifest endurance and, together, going along the road of solving specific tasks, to come out of this crisis patch. That is one thing.

Second, we have mapped out steps which we have called the crisis management program, and we are implementing these and will enhance this; that is what we are working on. Finally, I think our invitation to civil accord, to constructive cooperation in the interests of the homeland, our people's patriotism, ultimately all this will let us avoid extreme aggravation, although all the time these forces are acting in a provocative, inflamatory manner. This must be seen here, and I hope this discussion is being heard by our people and that they understand this. Today, by the way, I met representatives of agriculture, of the agrarian sector of the whole country. They very critically...[changes thought] and they are those who have gone over to new forms of work and reached interesting results...

[Kravchenko, interrupting] Farmers and so on.

[Gorbachev] That is right. But, at the same time, they said they were short of this, that, and the other, and they address the working class, the miners: How can one act like that now? Yield to these dangerous inflammatory calls, when we are facing such important tasks? Meanwhile, metallurgical works are stopping; engineering is getting no metal. Azerbaijan representatives say: The director of the Novolipetsk works spoke—on television, by the way, two days ago...

[Kravchenko, interrupting] Frantsenyuk.

[Gorbachev] Yes. He described the situation. The Azerbaijan representatives say: That is the combine we get metal from and make equipment for our oil-extracting industry. We make 70 percent of all that is made in the country.

The oil men won't get any of it from us. So all this is going to reflect on oil extraction. So, how far can it go? It's a chain reaction. There are many needs; there are many problems. Today, everyone can present these problems and these well-founded needs. But, we can solve issues if we continue to increase—using also the transfer to new economic management methods—the results of our activity and, thus, create that which will enable us to solve equally production and social problems, maintain defense, and so on. That means we must follow the road of the chosen course; we must follow it firmly and show endurance. Of course, now we, the leadership of the country, need support and understanding from the people, even considering the critical nature of the opinions toward us. Well, that's how I would...

[Fesunenko, interrupting] Mikhail Sergeyevich, speaking about the crisis situation, about the critical situation, of course, using a bad journalistic cliche, I would like to note that right now probably the hottest spot in our country is Moscow. Here, we have the sharpest division of various political forces and, let's say, the loudest opposition, and the most powerful, largest rallies, and perhaps even the emptiest shelves in the shops, which is also adding fuel to the fire, so to speak. The Moscow Soviet, on one hand, manifests growing opposition to the center and, on the other, the life in the city is becoming increasingly out of control, to put it mildly. For instance, the latest conflict, concerning the rallies that were planned for 28 March: the Supreme Soviet cancels this; The Moscow Soviet, on the contrary, permits it in a demonstrative manner; then, the prime minister gets involved, the Cabinet of Ministers...

[Kravchenko, interrupting] The president.

[Fesunenko] The president. I can imagine now what we must look like to people abroad. Of course, it's not the most important thing, what they think about us abroad, but from the view of normal logic, normal existence of state life, this is some kind of nonsense, a paradox. Probably the way out of this situation will be helped by Moscow receiving special status, which is probably to be debated some time, at least it was said so at the Supreme Soviet. How do you appraise this political impasse in Moscow, and how are we to find a way out of it?

[Gorbachev] You want to bring up another impasse! But you're probably right in your assessment of the situation in the capital. First, I would not let what the opposition forces and those in power in Moscow are undertaking here, get to me. We...[pauses] This is probably a question apart. But I would say that we are worried about the situation in Moscow, and in order, first and foremost, to maintain a certain level of living conditions, and then to change them for the better, these issues were recently examined by the prime minister, and a Cabinet of Ministers decision was adopted. I must say, we are keeping a watch on the questions of supply for Moscow; that is one of the problems today. The most interesting thing, if I had known what questions you had prepared for me—I see you have a lot of them prepared—I could have brought along...[pauses] I could have illustrated this with some figures. The fact is, I have received the information. For many categories, Moscow has received virtually no less meat, including in the last two months, January-February, than in past years, but the fact is that such a situation has already arisen in the market; people have so little faith in stability, that everything that appears in Moscow goes. It is all snapped up. So we have quite a bit of work to do in order to get the Moscow market back on track. I think that here we will have to work jointly with the Moscow authorities, come to their assistance. I have in mind both the leadership of Russia and the Union leadership, and I hope that the oblasts and republics which supply food to Moscow will also display the proper sense of responsibility. All the more so since the Muscovites are working well, in general, and they should get a pat on the back. Whatever the difficulties, they either fulfil, and even overfulfil, or they are close to providing what the country expects of them. They are all the more justified in expecting that the country will give its attention to the needs of Moscovites.

It is an enormous city, it needs concern from the center, and we should probably give it even greater attention and make greater efforts to provide the relevant assistance for Muscovites. That is the main thing. We hope that Muscovites, the working people of Moscow, will display restraint and a high level of organization, and will not give in to all these attempts to destroy their equilibrium, to draw them into some sort of political battle. In general, despite all the efforts of the opposition, they are not managing to draw the Moscow workers along behind them.

If one is to talk about the political moods in Moscow, these are affected by the fact that perestroyka impinges upon many strata connected with the reforming of the defense complex, which is strongly represented here, the reforming of science, the perestroyka of defense-orientated science. It impinges here on collectives, on other detachments of the scientific-technological intelligentsia. There are complex processes going on in all these groups, these enormous population groups, and probably this fuels both dissatisfaction and the behavior of individual people, making them act harshly, in our view, but probably justifiably, in their view. It is a kind of reaction to the acute situation. It seems to me that the whole set of problems will be tackled in Moscow in the context of the process of reforms, and in addition, we must also, evidently, complete as quickly as possible the process to draft and pass the law on the status of Moscow as the capital of the Union and the capital of the Russian Federation.

A great deal of work has been done, but points of view have diverged. There is the point of view of the Moscow City Soviet, which includes elements that—if they were accepted and built into the law—we would then need to rearrange all structures of power in Moscow, and reject Soviet power and Soviet bodies. Although I must say this way of putting things on the part of the Moscow Soviet does have behind it certain realistic considerations, and that is that executive authorities have to function effectively, I think this should be resolved on the basis of the right distribution of powers and clear distribution of obligations between the soviets and the executive bodies, and all the other structures of power, of executive authority, so a general consensus must be sought here, and we must arrive at the correct solution.

I also think that Moscow has become a hostage of the political confrontation that is under way in the country. Much is connected with this. As far as the current situation that you were talking about is concerned, and in connection with this, what the standpoint and actions of the authorities at all levels are like, I would like to say for my own part that I think that the Supreme Soviet—where this subject first arose at the initiative of the deputies—acted correctly in saying that that now, when we are resolving major problems of the economy, socioeconomic questions, when we are on the eve...[pauses] when the Supreme Soviet is working and making important decisions—it should resolve problems as quickly as possible—when we are on the eve of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies, which will also be focused on fundamental questions of the life of the Russian Federation and, consequently, of Moscow, then at present an atmosphere must not be created in the capital—where all of this is happening—which would prevent all of these constitutional bodies from functioning normally and from seeking correct decisions on the basis of comparing points of view and finally from finding correct...[pauses] from resolving everything correctly, from putting everything in its proper place, so to say.

Therefore, I support this, and this was manifested in my position. I delegated certain powers to the Cabinet of Ministers, indicating that it was necessary to prevent-...[pauses] to render all of our constitutional bodies for this period of time safe from pressures from mass meetings, from pressure on deputies. This is not good for anything. What sort of democracy is this? When such issues are being discussed, people must give consider everything thoroughly, weigh it, and adopt a firm stand. This, I think, can be understood by everybody. I know that the Cabinet of Ministers, implementing my instructions and the decisions of the Supreme Soviet, considered it necessary to also adopt the relevant decisions. They have been published, and today the cabinet intends to appeal to Muscovites to maintain calm, not to yield to these provocative calls, to keep on working, to tackle practical matters—that is the most important thing right now—and to rely on the constitutional bodies. I think that is the way it should be.

[Kravchenko] A final question, Mikhail Sergeyevich, a very personal one. Enormous stress has come your way, particularly of late—nervous, psychological, and mental stress—and I would like to ask, simply man to man, how do you feel? From where do you draw fresh strength?

[Gorbachev] It may be interesting for you and the viewers to know that I was asked this question in Finland while on a visit there. The wife of President Koivisto asked: Mr. Gorbachev, Mr. President, how do you keep all this up? I said, you know, this is an unexpected question, out of the blue. If I were to think about it, I might be able to present a whole argument on this score, but I would like to make at least three points. I would like to repeat what I said, because later on I thought, this was really said spontaneously and sincerely, I think, on my part.

I said: You know, I am grateful first and foremost to my parents—peasants who, so to speak, laid down a certain foundation. And peasant life taught me to be cheerful, to endure, to be sensible, and not lose my head. That is the first thing. The second thing I said was that I am grateful to Raisa Maksimovna, my wife, who takes great care of me, and understands what a burden and responsibility I have. And third, and this is no less important than what I have already said, is the fact that I believe in the rightness of my cause and of the choice I have made. Because if your faith is destroyed, nothing will save you. As long as a person is strong in spirit, as long as he preserves his faith in what he is doing, I think he will both carry on feeling all right, and will work efficiently and productively. I think that applies to everyone, and I am no exception to this.

[Kravchenko] Thank you for this interview.

[Fesunenko] We wish you success.

[Kravchenko] ...and good health.

[Gorbachev] Thank you.

RSFSR Oil, Gas Workers Threaten To Strike

PM2703211691 Moscow TRUD in Russian 28 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by Ye. Slobzhin of the Federation of RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) Independent Trade Unions Press Service: "Another Ultimatum"]

[Text] Apparently another crushing blow lies in store for the hard-hit Soviet economy in the near future. Hot on the heels of the miners, Russia's oil and gas workers have started talking about a strike. The presidium of the council of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Trade Union of Workers in Oil and Gas Sectors of Industry and Construction has stated that "no one should doubt its readiness to use the right to organize collective defense actions, a right granted to it by law and by its statutes."

The crux of the matter is this. Despite the fact that the Union gets 92 percent of its oil and 80 percent of its gas from the Russian Federation, the republic's extraction sectors themselves are on the brink of total collapse. The visibly low price, preserved for decades, of the most important sources of energy—so that 30 rubles [R] has been paid for a ton of oil, while a tonne of mineral water cost R160—and the ill-conceived tax policy have brought a once highly profitable sphere of the economy to the point of financial ruin. Moreover, deliveries of essential materials, industrial products, and food to the oil regions are constantly disrupted. Although in 1991 oil and gas prices increased, the entire increase was completely "eaten up" by the rise in prices for materials and equipment. The wages of workers in the sector have basically not gone up.

In order to change the situation at long last, the trade union presidium has, in particular, categorically demanded that the value of oil be set at R130-145 a tonne, and that of gas at R80 per 1,000 cubic meters. Upper limits on wages should be removed. Extraction and transportation organizations should retain part of the output from the state order, to sell at their own discretion. Permission should be granted for independent sales of oil and gas extracted over and above the state order, at contract prices. Permission should be granted for low-yield and exhausted deposits to be handed over on the basis of concessions or leasing.

In the event that the USSR president and Cabinet of Ministers fail to examine these demands and to come to the negotiating table in the first 10 days of April, the trade union warns, the responsibility for the consequences of the social explosion will rest with them.

Metallurgists Strike for Pay Increases

PM2703184091 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Union Edition p 3

[Report by A. Krestyaninov, chief of the "Soyuzmetall" trade union center press service: "Metallurgists in Solidarity With Miners"]

[Text] On 27 March, the country's metallurgists carried out a Unionwide action in defense of their vital interests. On the appeal of the Council of the Federation of USSR Mining and Metallurgical Industry Workers Trade Unions—the "Soyuzmetall" trade union center—workers' meetings and rallies were held at enterprises in the sector, where the participants formulated their demands to the Union government. Chief among these was for the earnings of miners and metallurgists to be at least doubled. The necessity for this raise was backed by socioeconomic calculations which take into account the extremely high labor-intensiveness of the metallurgical professions, galloping inflation, and the sharp price rises on the consumer market.

Where will the resources for these purposes come from? The answer was suggested by the participants in the action themselves: The discriminatory restrictions that were set on the price of metal products should be lifted. Because of the mere fact that enterprises in the sector are obliged to acquire raw materials and materials at free prices or so-called contract prices, and sell their output at a rigidly fixed price rate, they are short of around 3 billion rubles! Furthermore, metallurgists are demanding that they be given the opportunity to increase the pay fund by the amount of the value of the annual growth in consumer goods production and also of the resources saved.

The participants in the action expressed their support for the economic demands of the striking miners and called on the country's leadership to simultaneously resolve the problems of coalminers and the related metallurgical sector, because as a rule they are closely interlinked. In order to do this the government must first immediately sit down at the negotiating table with representatives of the trade unions of industry's leading sectors. It is only by means of dialogue and not confrontation that we can get out of the economic impasse in which our country finds itself. If the government continues to pay no attention to the disastrous position of the metallurgists, they reserve the right to more resolute actions.

Further on Bakatin News Conference

PM2803114591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Union Edition p 8

[Report by G. Alimov: "V. Bakatin: Observing Constitutional Order"]

[Text] At a routine briefing held by Vitaliy Ignatenko, head of the USSR president's press service, Vadim Viktorovich Bakatin, member of the country's Security Council, addressed Soviet and foreign journalists.

This was his first official meeting with mass media representatives since his departure from the post of internal affairs minister and appointment as member of the USSR Security Council. His answers to numerous questions showed that V. Bakatin is still true to himself; he is open and sincere. He reminded journalists that the Security Council is not an administrative organ but makes recommendations to the president. The council's apparatus is only in the process of taking shape. The distribution of duties between the two "spare" members of the Security Council—Ye. Primakov and V. Bakatin—to use Vadim Viktorovich's expression, is extremely arbitrary. Primakov is responsible for economic questions and Bakatin for policy. Considering that policy cannot exist without economics and vice versa, according to V. Bakatin, he and Ye. Primakov will be working in close contact.

V. Bakatin said that it was simply essential to set up an institution like the Security Council. In his opinion, there simply could not have been any other system of state or public security during the period that we lived through for 70 years. Political security was ensured by two mechanisms: monopoly on ideology on the one hand, and suppression of dissent using law-enforcement structures on the other. But V. Bakatin believes that there must be totally different institutions in a democratic society and these are now being set up. In our country a concept of public or state security has still not been formulated; but in a democratic society this concept is entirely linked to citizens' security. V. Bakatin sees the concept of this kind of security as some kind of consensus, some kind of accord, and a balance of political forces resulting in support for government policy.

On the Temporary Suspension of Rallies in Moscow

The government is entitled to adopt any decisions. But, in Vadim Viktorovich's opinion, bans do not fit in very well with the democratic policy that we are pursuing. "As a person with an in-depth understanding of the nature of democratic principles I do not think that this decision is entirely correct," V. Bakatin said. "But, as a citizen who must carry out the will of his government, I think that we must obey this decision in this case. It can be criticized, but it must be implemented." He does not think that there are any problems with this from the political viewpoint. But there are a number of questions from the viewpoint of public security. "Perhaps some people want to produce some kind of provocations and later accuse the authorities of being unable to maintain public order at the proper level..."

Is There a Way Out of the "Miners' Crisis"?

V. Bakatin reacted as follows to the question of how he sees a way out of the "miners' crisis," assuming that the miners do not give up their political demands: The way out lies in their giving up their political demands. According to Vadim Viktorovich, these demands have been generated by the coming extraordinary Russian Congress and stem from deputies' concern over their political leaders' future. They are also the result of Russian deputies' outright calls for strikes. At any rate, V. Bakatin is convinced that these demands are unconstitutional. "There is no constitutional mechanism to decide the fate or future of any political leader on the basis of the demands made by a particular professional group," he stressed. It must not be forgotten that the president has immunity under the constitution and can only be removed from his post if he violates the constitution. There is a constitutional procedure and it must be observed.

Is the Center About To Remove B. Yeltsin?

V. Bakatin was asked: Do the measures banning demonstrations and rallies in Moscow mean that the center is about to remove Yeltsin at the Congress of RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] People's Deputies? "The center is not about to remove Yeltsin. It was Yeltsin who was about to remove Gorbachev," he said. In response to requests for him to comment on Boris Nikolayevich's political credo over the last few weeks, V. Bakatin said the following: "No comment. I will merely quote something Winston Churchill said, that is popular with politicians, about how a statesman differs from a politician. A statesman thinks about the future; politicians think about the next election. Draw your own conclusions from that."

On the January Events in the Baltics

V. Bakatin described what happened in Lithuania in January as absolutely overt unconstitutional action. "There is a legally elected parliament there, a legitimate authority, and unconstitutional actions were taken against this legitimate authority." In his opinion, this should have been harshly condemned both in the Union parliament and by the president. "The president only did that seven days later. I criticized him for not abruptly dissociating himself right away from the illegal actions. However, I saw that Gorbachev did not have quite the right picture at the time..."

Gorbachev, Farm Leaders View Economic Reordering

PM2803132191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 27 Mar 91 Second Edition p 1

[TASS report: "M.S. Gorbachev's Meeting with Farm Leaders"]

[Text] On 26 March a meeting took place in the CPSU Central Committee between M.S. Gorbachev, president of the USSR and general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and leaders of kolkhozes, sovkhozes, and other formations of the agro-industrial complex which have switched to new forms of economic management and a mixed economy.

The meeting was addressed by I.F. Mikhaylenko, chairman of the Sverdlov kolkhoz, Krasnogvardeyskiy Rayon, Stavropol Kray; I.Yu. Lou, chairman of the "Komintern" union of peasant farms, Kurdayskiy Rayon, Dzhambul Oblast; I.V. Grigoryev, director of the "Rossiya" people's enterprise, Sosnovskiy Rayon, Chelyabinsk Oblast; A.L. Dementyev, chairman of the "Zavety Ilicha" kolkhoz, Maynskiy Rayon, Ulyanovsk Oblast; N.T. Yurov, lessee of a family farm on a homestead plot of the "Matveyevo-Kurganskiy" sovkhoz, Rostov Oblast; I.N. Mamedov, general director of the "Shakhdan" agrofirm, Azerbaijan SSR; D.N. Paliy, chairman of the "Leninskaya Iskra" kolkhoz, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast; A.D. Chervyakov, chairman of the "Put Lenina" kolkhoz, Kotelnicheskiy Rayon, Kirov Oblast; V.G. Doroshenko, first secretary of the Kazanskiy Ukrainian Communist Party raykom [rayon committee], Nikolayev Oblast; V.M. Goroshko, chairman of the kolkhoz named for Gorkiy, Pinskiy Rayon, Brest Oblast; B.A. Briyedis, director of the "Skuyene" sovkhoz, Tsesisskiy Rayon, Latvian SSR; L.V. Ivanov, chairman of the "Zapovit Lenina" kolkhoz, Aleksandriyskiy Rayon, Kirovograd Oblast, and others.

There was a thorough talk about how, given all the present difficulties, in order to ensure real priority for the food sphere it is essential to create conditions for the peasant's vital activity and to promote the social transformation of the countryside. The utmost must be done to increase the production of agricultural output and to build up stocks of food so as to prevent the disruption of parity in relations with other sectors of the national economy and retain proper supplies of resources, especially equipment, fertilizers, and construction materials, and on this basis [sentence as published]. It was emphasized that the solution of this problem must be determined not on the path of setting forms of economic management against each other, not on the path of appeals for the abolition of social production, but by ensuring the effective use of the production and economic potential which has already been created. Debate showed that matters proceed more successfully where people have embarked boldly on the reform of production relations by developing the lease and cooperative and joint-stock forms of ownership. They enable the peasant to become the true master of the land and the means of production and to dispose freely of the results of his labor. The thought was expressed that it is necessary to realize in full the potential of the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, cooperative associations, peasant farms, and other production and sale formations and make the maximum use of their interests through integration and the fundamental reorganization of the structures of the mixed economy taking shape in the agro-industrial sphere and through the intensification of economic ties with industrial enterprises and with urban and rural enterprises as a whole.

Kravchenko Notes Growing Role of TV, Radio

LD2703185491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1125 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, 27 Mar (TASS)—Today the state protocol directorate of the USSR Foreign Ministry organized a meeting between Leonid Kravchenko, chairman of the All-Union State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, and heads of diplomatic missions accredited in the USSR.

The foreign diplomats were informed about the reorganization of state television and radio broadcasting and about the mechanism for the functioning of the freshly created company and its cooperation with independent republican television and radio broadcasting organizations. The speaker paid special attention to the increased role of television and radio—the most mass-market and influential news media—in conditions of perestroyka and exacerbated opposition between various political forces in Soviet society. At the end of the meeting Leonid Kravchenko answered numerous questions from representatives of the diplomatic corps.

Further on Kravchenko Meeting

LD2703212891 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 27 Mar 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Representatives of the diplomatic corps in Moscow met today with Kravchenko, chairman of the all-Union Television and Radio Broadcasting Company.

[Correspondent A. Melnikov] The special interest of the diplomats, and not only of the diplomats, in the role being played now by Soviet television served as the occasion for this meeting. And this is understandable. In the conditions of the fierce political struggle which is under way in our country, television, as one of the most powerful mass media, has found itself at the very center of the large-scale confrontation of the sides.

The chairman of the State Television and Radio Company, which was set up recently, described its structure, its sources of finance and the tasks facing it. He stressed that its work is organized—taking into account first and foremost the viewers' interest—on the basis of thorough sociological research.

Defending the position of the country's president and of his government is one of the main areas of the company's activity. There is no censorship in our country, Kravchenko stated. We permit different political views but we are categorically opposed to open opposition to Gorbachev.

Speaking of the quality of broadcasts, he noted that our artistic, commercial, and also news broadcasting is still far from perfect and needs improving.

In conclusion Kravchenko answered the diplomats' numerous questions.

Shevardnadze Criticizes 'Slowness' of Reforms

PM2703200009I

[Report on interview with former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze by Martin Sixsmith; place, date of interview not given; from the "6 O'Clock News" program; Shevardnadze speaks in Russian with superimposed translation into English]

[Editorial Report] London BBC Television Network in English at 1800 GMT on 25 March on the "6 O'Clock News" program, during a report by Martin Sixsmith, carries an interview, translated into English, with former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

At the start of the report Sixsmith says that concerted efforts by reactionary forces to overthrow perestroyka have forced Shevardnadze to speak out. Shevardnadze comments: "They have begun a serious attack on democracy. They do not like the changes we brought about and they are attacking the people who took part in the perestroyka process."

Sixsmith goes on to describe relations between President Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, stating: "Mr. Shevardnadze was always close to Mikhail Gorbachev, but his continuing loyalty to the Soviet leader no longer hides traces of doubt about the president's commitment to democratic reform." Shevardnadze says: "I saw Gorbachev yesterday, and he repeated to me that he remains true to the ideals of our revolution. I still believe, or I want to believe, that he is still the leader of perestroyka. There have been sad events—the use of force in the Baltics and elsewhere, some unpleasantness over the media—but these are temporary setbacks. I want to believe that."

Sixsmith goes on to explain: "It was the campaign by the hardline Soviet military to undermine his arms reduction pledges by shifting tanks out of the treaty area that helped push Eduard Shevardnadze into resigning, and he remains deeply worried by the army's growing attempts to interfere in political life." Shevardnadze says: "I have a feeling of dissatisfaction at what happened over that treaty [CFE], a feeling of resentment; I certainly do have that. I would not say at this stage that the military are out of control—not at this stage. But if events develop differently, I can not exclude that that will happen."

The report suggests that Shevardnadze regards the current reforms aimed at tackling the crisis as too little too late. Shevardnadze comments: "We were too slow, we should have acted earlier—and I include myself in that criticism. If the new Union treaty we are revealing today had been proposed three years ago, it would have gone through without trouble, even in the Baltics, because people still believed in perestroyka. But we missed our chance. Not everything is lost, but it is very hard now to regain the faith of the people."

MOSCOW NEWS Profiles Pavlov

PM1903164091 Moscow MOSCOW NEWS in English No. 10, 10-17 Mar 91 p 6

[Vladimir Orlov article: "Premier Has Nerves of Steel"]

[Text] Speaking about the new Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, a physiognomist described him as an obvious pragmatic, not fond of power but not inclined to submit to another's influence. He doesn't care much about what people say about him, therefore he is ready to take unpopular decisions. He dosen't like to exceed the bounds of within which he has to act, and has a very strong, nervous system. Observing only the Premier's appearance, the scientist wasn't too far from the truth. But what if we try to give a more detailed description of the man who surprised all experienced political scientists. He rose rapidly through the ranks of the Soviet nomenklatura, and less than 40 days after Mikhail Gorbachev appointed him Prime Minister, he managed to alienate both Soviet public opinion and Western businessmen.

The eleventh Soviet Premier is the first professional economist - a doctor of science - and "self-seeking financier". Experts - some who know him only by working with him, state unanimously that he knows far more about economics than his predcessor Nikolay Ryzhkov. While Ryzhkov was relying heavily on the intellect of people around him and on his own intuition (quite often both let him down), the new Premier can rely on his own thorough knowledge. He began to amass it when studying at the Institute of Finance in Moscow, where it is said he sometimes expressed dangerous ideas about the advantages of market relations. A staunch supporter of the market economy - this was the image that many economists had of a successful financier. By the age of 53 he had catapaulted from a modest employee of a district financial department with no patron, to the President's choice as Premier. In between, there were numerous promotions at the Russian and Union Ministries of Finance, at the State Planning Committee, and finally - Chairman of the State Committee for Prices, in 1986. He sharply criticized the existing price-formation policy and promised that "henceforth the public will learn officially about any new prices". Later, when he had already occupied the post of the USSR Finance Minister, he would recall proudly that during his work at the Committee "there was no direct rise in state retail prices".

While in charge of the country's finances, Pavlov, as is the custom of the Council of Ministers leadership, worked in his office past midnight. On such days his wife Valentina Petrovna came to fetch him, and he obeyed unwillingly. He did not hide his desire for the top post in the government. So, the "economist with a wealth of work experience and strong will", as Gorbachev described him, got his own way.

The first step of the "strong-willed economist" was the exchange of 50- and 100-rouble notes, although shortly before this he had declared: "A reform (monetary - V.O.) is not envisaged in our plans." Having done this work with determination, he admits: "It took us about a year to prepare for this step..." Then he added: "We knew it would be difficult to avoid hurting innocent people. But this was the lesser of the two evils."

His second step was when he publicly accused the private banks of Austria, Switzerland, Canada and other Western countries "of a financial war aainst the USSR". Pavlov mysteriously hinted that had it not been for the exchange of money a disaster would have set in and pensioners "would be able to buy only a couple of match boxes for their 100 roubles... It was a matter not of days but of hours."

Experts agree that Valentin Pavlov looks more and more like a kamikaze. At best he will become a "whipping boy" for the President. But for the time being he looks more resolute and bolder than Gorbachev.

CPSU Conference on Multiparty Activity Opens

LD2703132391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1725 GMT 26 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Roman Grigoryev]

[Text] Moscow, 26 Mar (TASS)—How should the CPSU build its activity in the conditions of political pluralism? An exchange of views on this question is taking place at an all-Union conference which opened in Moscow today. Those taking part are party workers, scientists, and people's deputies. CPSU Central Committee Secretary Valentin Kuptsov, who spoke today, stressed that "the foundation underlying relations between the CPSU and other political parties and public movements are humanism and democracy." At the same time, as was noted, communists are just beginning to master new principles in their activity to meet the conditions of a multiparty system.

The participants of the meeting are trying to analyze the tendencies that are taking shape in Soviet society. They are discussing various forecasts of the way social development may proceed in the country, taking stock of the results of the establishment of political pluralism in the country.

Conference participants are working in groups. At their meetings they are discussing topical problems for the party, such as parliamentary activity among communists, the struggle of the Communist Party for political leadership in society, and the role of the mass media in the establishment of a multiparty system.

The conference will continue its work tomorrow.

Kalnichenko Speaks at KGB Talks on Border Defense

LD2703170591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 26 Mar 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] The first party conference of CPSU organizations in the USSR KGB border troops was held in Moscow today. A report was given by Colonel General Kalinichenko, commander of the border troops. The delegates discussed the trend of party work in connection with the drawing up of a new concept of the defense of state borders, and elected the party committee.

Local KGB Member Urges Depoliticized Service

PM2603165591 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 20 Mar 91 p 2

[Article by Major Aleksandr Mavrin, staffer at Volgograd Oblast USSR KGB Directorate: "Secret Rendezvous in a Smoking Room. Danger Posed to State by Workers' Movement"]

[Excerpts] The first policy changes in relation to working people were introduced at the start of the eighties by the Polish "Solidarnosc." People started weighing up whether such a turn of events was possible in our country. At that time it was thought that there was nothing more terrible than the very fact of a strike, and for that reason we were directed toward preventing any spontaneous or organized protest. Dissatisfaction was not to be expressed in open, basic forms merely because this dented the authority of party bosses.

With the start of perestroyka directives oriented toward monitoring the operational situation in workers' collectives quietly petered out. Reforms in the KGB, even if slow, did come about. USSR KGB Chairman V. Kryuchkov, addressing heads of diplomatic missions last May, said that the state security organs do not intend to "conceal the aims and tasks or the nature and areas of their activities. The purpose of all our work is to serve the people's interests, to protect the revolutionary process of renewal...." Signs of perestroyka in the KGB were also cited: The abolition of the KGB's Fifth Directorate and its subunits in the provinces" and the formation of subunits in "Three" (protection of the Soviet constitutional system). This was perceived as the scrapping of wholesale monitoring of entire social groups.

But the year that followed these declarations confirmed former political persuasions. Many documents that I come across in the course of my duty are once again oriented toward political opposition. The saddest thing is that committee staffers are unavoidably being embroiled in a political struggle.

Last February Volgograd's largest workers' collectives unequivocally supported demands put forward at rallies for the resignation of the oblast's political leadership, including that of the chief of the Volgograd Oblast USSR KGB Directorate, a member of the CPSU oblast committee bureau. The bureau then resigned. Some months later, on the initiative of the chief of the department performing counterintelligence support for industrial enterprises, an instruction "On the Sociopolitical Situation in the Workers' Collectives of Volgograd City and Oblast" was prepared. The document was signed by V. Tarasov, the directorate's deputy chief.

In a report addressed to our directorate chief V. Guro I wrote at the time: "The document gives an unjustifiably negative assessment of the process of politicization of the masses and formulates tasks for global monitoring of the workers' movement as well as the activities of party, soviet, and trade union organs... in labor collectives, which, in view of the document's geographic scope and the multitude of forces and resources involved in its forthcoming implementation, is evidence of attempts to retain unlimited powers, including political powers, for the state security organs.... I beg you to stop it from being executed and amend its contents."

Some directorate officers supported me, and the instruction was recalled from all subunits. We did not mention what had happened again. But then in February this year an instruction "On Giving Information About the Operational Situation in the Work Environment" is circulated to subunits and city and rayon apparatuses of the directorate by the same Department Six (economic counterintelligence), bearing the signature of another KGB directorate's deputy chief—V. Dyatlenko—and referring to a USSR KGB cipher cable. This instruction's contents are a painful reminder of last year's document: To expose "organized structures" in the work environment, the degree of their influence on labor collectives, the workers' attitude to appeals to organize a different type of extremist actions, referred to as actions of civil disobedience and political strikes by the authors. The client, who is modestly called the "center and authorities," is additionally interested in the factors and conditions "producing a negative effect on the work environment... of the mass media" and "the dynamics of the development of an independent workers' movement and its collaboration with international organizations and professional associations." The client asks that "an assessment by operational sources... of the negative consequences of the development of destructive phenomena in the work environment be given."

In sum, the program has been set: If there are actions, they are bound to be "extremist"; activities must be "destructive," phenomena must be "negative...." What use is this political lexicon in an operational document meant for professionals? [passage omitted]

Last September a strike committee sprang up at the Volgograd tractor parts and standard designs plant. Not a month had passed before the technical supervisory service and the administration banned "any agitation or organizational activities" by the strike committee. Displeased by the ban, the former strike committee members posted up two of their protest leaflets. The administration, in the person of Deputy Director B. Atopov, made a retaliatory move: On behalf of the leadership and technical supervisory service it requested the KGB directorate's central rayon department to "render assistance to normalize the situation at the enterprise."

What many economic managers would give to receive a helping hand from a small committee of national salvation, which would take the "troublemakers" in hand, drive politics outside the entrance gate, and put up placards saying "Your Tongue Is Your Enemy," "Beware of Spies!"

In accordance with the Decree on Combating Economic Sabotage a KGB staffer can open any door in any plant. If he is given the task of finding something intentional about a burst sewage pipe, then he will look for it.

In recent years there have been many events in which it turned out that warning information from the KGB was like unclaimed baggage (remember Sumgait, Dushanbe, Osh).... At any rate, this information had no effect. But on the other hand the requirement for politicized information from the KGB is growing with every passing month. They extract the most "current" things from this information (like the "case of the 140 billion") and start a propaganda campaign, forgetting that the political situation has nothing to do with protecting state security.

I am convinced that the depoliticization of the state security organs cannot be put off. The highest legislative and executive authorities must communicate with their people without the KGB as middleman. Criticism of the authorities, including criticism in the forms of rallies and strikes, is a manifestation of feedback. Without it, everything that is happening will inevitably come as a surprise to the authorities.

It is now hardly possible to shoehorn the workers' movement into the framework of any one party, but how many more such attempts will there be? KGB interference in these processes will undermine the positions of the person who wants to utilize the state security organs here, and will inflict irreparable damage on the organs themselves. Moreover, in the very social environment that until now has been the most loyal to the committee. While neither the "center" nor the "authorities" are reflecting on this danger, the organs' operational staffers cannot help thinking about it.

I do not want to participate in a "class struggle" and cannot calmly look on while the whole people are dragged into this fight.

Economic

Norilsk Coal Mine Stops Work

LD2803130791 Moscow TASS in English
1240 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—Coal mining at one of the biggest pits in Norilsk, the Krasnoyarsk territory, has stopped.

The strike that started here at midnight so far affects only coal mining, while all systems ensuring the mine's functioning still operate. Other mines continue working.

The miners demand a 100 per cent increase of wages, indexed incomes to offset inflation, the privatisation of "Norilskiy Nikel" concern and the right to own property for every employee of the Norislk mining and metallurgical complex.

The miners also demanded the resignation of the Union government and the country's president and setting up a coalition government supported by the people. The miners expressed solidarity with strikers.

Collectives at the complex set a package of ten items, including economic demands, to the Union government. If they are not fulfilled, a general strike may begin on April 3, the second anniversary of the first strike by Norilsk miners.

Mining strikes continue in the south Urals, the Pechora coal basin, Kuzbass, western Donbass. Miners are making more demands.

In addition to demanding an increase in wages and pensions by 150 per cent, the miners say that they will call off the strike if a general tariff agreement is concluded, if losses resulting from the stoppage are transferred to the all-Union budget and the wages for March are paid.

Government commissions in some areas of coal mining are negotiating with miners' delegations.

Coal mining equipment began to operate for the first time since March at a number of mines that are still on strike in the Donetsk region, the Ukraine. Three mines in Krasnoarmeisk, where the strike first started, began to turn out coal on March 27. Sixteen mines out of the 122 coal mining enterprises still remain fully or partially on strike. Work at mines where the strike was called off is gradually returning to normal.

Miners in Taymyrskiy Stage Strike

LD2803140691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1200 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Unattributed report from the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] Extraction of raw materials has been halted at one of the biggest mines, the Taymyrskiy. A full strike by the miners has begun here, but so far only concerns the extracting process. All life-support systems at the enterprises are operating. The other mines continue to operate.

Coal Minister Says Miners' Talks Scheduled

LD2803112291 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0900 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Talks between the central authorities and representatives of the coal mining industry enterprises now on strike have been scheduled to take place in Moscow on 2 April, Shchadov, minister of the country's coal industry, reports. In his words, representatives of workforces that have stopped their strike will be the only ones permitted to take part in the talks. According to IZVESTIYA, this gave rise to protests in many regions affected by the strikes. At the same time, coal extraction equipment at a number of mines in Donetsk Oblast resumed operation for the first time since the beginning of the month, even though the miners did not officially announce the end of their strike.

Miners' Strikes Continue Despite Bans on Protests

PM2703183091 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Union Edition p 1

[Unattributed report: "Still 'Hot' in the Pits"]

[Text] The USSR Supreme Soviet resolution on the suspension of strikes at coal industry enterprises has not yet led to the suspension of the strikes. According to A. Aslanidi, deputy chairman of the Kuzbass Strike Committees Council, it "merely fans the flames." "A compromise with the Kuzbass miners can only be sought on the basis of a discussion of political demands," the workers' leader told a POSTFACTUM agency correspondent.

The situation at the sector's enterprises has not been eased either by the invitation to their representatives to go to Moscow for talks with the USSR president and Cabinet of Ministers. Coal Industry Minister M. Shchadov announced these talks, planned for 2 April, during a telephone linkup. According to him, only representatives of labor collectives that are not involved in strikes will be allowed to attend, which caused protests in the strike-bound regions. In particular, Yu. Kostyuchenko, member of the Vorkuta City Workers' Strike Committee, said: "The Vorkuta miners do not intend to go back to work and they will urge the collectives to boycott the meeting, which is conditional on an end to the strike."

At the same time, there are calls for the discontinuation of the strikes. For instance, the Lvov Oblast Soviet, while acknowledging the "high degree of organization and political culture" of the striking miners of the Lvovsko-Volynskiy coalfield, appealed to them to go back to work, since the "continuation of the strike will have no political effect, but could have serious adverse economic consequences." N. Lisovenko, IZVESTIYA's correspondent in Donetsk, reports that many deputies made similar demands at a Donetsk Oblast Soviet session.

Reports continue to come in about a voluntary collection of money to aid the strikers. For example, activists of the Sverdlovsk branch of the "Democratic Choice" movement collected 15,000 rubles [R] and food and the "Krasnoyarskugol" Association collective put R500,000 into the miners' strike fund and sent several hundred tonnes of food, the INTERFAX agency reports.

According to data put out by the POSTFACTUM agency on the evening of 26 March, in the Union as a whole 171 enterprises and 27 mine engineering admninistrations are on strike and 27 pits are operating but not dispatching coal. This includes 59 mines on strike in the Donbass, seven in the "Vorkutaugol" Association, four in "Kizelugol," 10 in "Tulaugol," five in "Krasnoyarskugol," five in Chelyabinsk, and three in Inta.

The strike goes on unabated in the Kuzbass, but that is another story. Not just quantitatively either.

What is the essence of the strikers' demands? How organized are they? What is the dominant mood in the region at the moment? The answer to these and other questions will be found in the piece "The Fire Reaches the Surface" by IZVESTIYA correspondent V. Kostyukovskiy on page three.

Coal Miners To Disregard Strike Suspension

LD2703213991 Moscow TASS in English 2123 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 27 TASS—The strike committee of Vorkuta and Inta coalminers (the north of the European part of the Soviet Union) today decided to go ahead with the strike which still involves ten out of thirteen Vorkuta coalmines and all the five mines of the Intaugol company.

Coalminers view the USSR parliament resolution, passed on Tuesday and calling for suspending the strikes, as an "anti-democratic" and "anti-popular" decision which will only heighten tension and instability in the Pechora coal basin.

Today coalminers sent a telegramme to the president of the USSR and the Soviet parliament, conveying a protest at the Soviet parliament resolution which calls for suspending the coalminers' strike for two months.

The telegramme also reports that coalminers in the polar region insist on their demands and do not suspend the strike for lack of direct talks with them, Vyacheslav Tukan, deputy chairman of the Vorkuta city workers' strike committee, told TASS.

A meeting between a delegation of the southern Urals coalminers and members of the government commission led by Anatoliy Belikov, USSR deputy minister of the coal industry, did not lead to the elaboration of a solution under which coalminers would interrupt the strike. The meeting lasted about four hours.

It was decided to hold a conference of the work collective of the coal producing amalgamation on March 29 to discuss the current situation.

Western Donbass coalminers' strike in the Ukraine has got out of control of the joint strike committee. The Pavlogradskaya, Blagodatnaya and Leninskiy Komsomol coalmines in the Ukraine suspended coal production after the Dnepropetrovsk regional court, upon examining a suit filed by the management of the Pavlogradugol amalgamation and the mine named after space heroes, found the strike to be unlawful.

There is an intranquil atmosphere at the Ternovskaya and Dneprovskaya coalmines.

Coalminers' demands are gaining in scope. Apart from demands for a 150 per cent increase in coalminers' pay and pensions, they make the resumption of work conditional on the conclusion of a general tariff agrrement, on putting idle time damages down to the all-union fund, and payment of wages for march.

Political demands have been added to economic ones: They demand the dissolution of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the resignation of the USSR president, the transfer of the powers of the legislative authority for the transitional period to the Federation Council, a direct presdiential election, the introduction of the office of a president in the Ukraine, the dissolution of the Ukrainian parliament and a new parliamentary election, the depoliticisation of the KGB, the Army, internal affairs agencies, and the subordination of interior departments to local authorities.

Coalmining equipment has resumed operation for the first time since the beginning of March at a number of Donetsk region coalmines (Ukraine) which still remain on strike.

On Wednesday coal production controllers' reports listed data on coal production at three mines of Krasnoarmeisk where coalminers had been the first to go on strike.

In all, out of 122 coalmines in the region, sixteen mines have not resumed coal production fully or partially. Work pace is coming back to normal at coalmines that have called off the strike.

A government commission continues to work in the region.

Strikers Said Seeking To Create 'Chaos'

LD2803131591 Moscow World Service in English 1200 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] The former chairman of the strike committee in the Kuznetsk coal mining region, Timuryaz Avaliani, has said the sponsors of the current miners' strike are exploiting the working class to stage chaos. He has left the strike committee on seeing that it is being taken over by the people making use of the workers' movement to restore capitalism. Avaliani recalled in an interview that at first these people put forward the deliberately unfeasible demand to increase the miners' pay more than two times over and then they started demanding that the USSR president, and the goverment [as heard] resign. Avaliani made the reminder that the government had earlier met quite a few miners' demands concerning pensions, leave, and wages.

Strikes Could Cause Steel Industry 'Catastrophe'

PM2803142791 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Report by "our own correspondent" L. Leonov: "Coal From Japan?"]

[Text] Chelyabinsk—It is a long way from Chelyabinsk to the Kuzbass, and Japan is four times farther. But it seems that the Chelyabinsk metallurgical combine would rather start procuring coal from Japan than from the Kuzbass, even though there is no coal in Japan and there is in the Kuzbass.

This is a perfect example of the confusion that has swept the national economy. The Japanese buy coal elsewhere, manufacture concentrate from it, and deliver it to our suicidal economy. It is quite possible that we could be buying our own Kuznetsk coal for hard currency in a roundabout way. After all, Central Television reported recently that, while denying their consumers, Kuzbass miners have increased shipments abroad.

The report of Japanese coal shipments is by no means a fabrication. The country's minister of metallurgy, S. Kolpakov, announced this recently in an all-Union telephone conference of metallurgists. "Japanese" coal will go to metallurgical plants in the Urals and Polish coal to metallurgists in the Ukraine. That is how the government intends to clear the air. The Ministry of the Coal Industry has been fined 560 million rubles [R]—excluding losses—which metal consumers will be required to reimburse.

But people at the Chelyabinsk metallurgical combine are skeptical about the possibility of "economic sanctions" of this kind against the ungovernable miners, who have been deceived by Russian blabbermouths. The only hope is that they will ultimately realize what a blow their strike has inflicted, not on the mythical center but on the people, on children freezing in apartments and schools and on their fellow workers.

Every metallurgist in Chelyabinsk will have a shortfall in wages of roughly R100 in March, yet the metallurgical combine—the flagship producer of quality steels—is agonizing on the verge of a stoppage.

Some 5,000 consumers are sending petitioners to the metallurgical combine with the plaintive request: Give us metal.

But there is no metal. What is more, if the Kuzbass miners do not start dispatching coal within the next few days, coke ovens that will take five or six years to restore will collapse; that is, there will be no metal for five or ten years...

This is a catastrophe for Chelyabinsk Oblast since metal forms virtually half of the oblast's commodity output. But it is also a catastrophe for the country.

Miners' Strike Causes Novosibirsk Fuel Shortage

LD2603190491 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1600 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Novosibirsk—It has become noticeably colder in the apartments of many of the town's people. The point is that one of the town's largest heat and electric power stations [TETS], which supplies heat to half of Novosibirsk, has shut down one of its four generating units. So far just one, because, since the start of the miners' strike in the Kuzbass, the flow of incoming fuel has begun to dry up, and coal stocks at the station have declined with corresponding speed.

TETS-5 has switched to fuel oil, but the stocks of fuel oil in Novosibirsk are only sufficient for a few days. It is a good thing that at least a few factory boiler-houses work on gas. The supply of gas from the Nizhnevartovsk field in Tomsk Oblast has also dwindled considerably because the gas pipeline runs first through the Kuzbass, where the heating and electricity plants are also suffering from a shortage of coal, and a considerable proportion of the gas that ought to go to the people of Novosibirsk is now being used there [in the Kuzbass].

In case coal supplies from the Kuzbass continue to be limited, the town executive committee has drawn up a plan for gradually switching off equipment, up to and including the complete shutdown of factories. The halting of the work of TETS-5 alone will leave 500,000 inhabitants without heat.

Novosibirsk power engineers have sent an official appeal to the Kuzbass miners. The appeal has, however, done nothing to help.

Coal Mine Strike Situation Updated

PM2803141791

[Editorial Report] Moscow TRUD in Russian 28 March 1991 carries on page 1 under the headline "Politicians Decide, Mines Lie Idle" a roundup of reports on the current state of the miners' strikes in various parts of the USSR.

An "own information" report from Vorkuta states: "Miners beyond the Arctic Circle are continuing the strike. Just three of Vorkuta's 13 mines were working as usual yesterday—the 'Vorgashorskaya,' 'Severnaya,' and 'Khalmer-Yu.' By decision of the city strike committee a further three are supplying the city with coal, and two are extracting fuel but not dispatching it."

A report by correspondent A. Isayev from Rostov-na-Donu reads: "In all, nine mines and mine administrations in Rostov Oblast are not working fully. Two mines of the 'Rostovugol' Production Association—the 'Yubileynaya' and 'Ayutinskaya'—have begun extracting coal but are not dispatching it."

A report by correspondent Yu. Kotlyarov from Kemerovo states: "According to the oblast soviet executive committee's data, basic work was not being carried out at 38 mines and one open-cut pit in the Kuzbass yesterday. Enrichment factories have also been compelled to stop work: There is nothing to process, although the collectives are not on strike."

IZVESTIYA Rounds Up Strike Developments

PM2703152391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 27 Mar 91 Union Edition p 1

[Feature comprising correspondent N. Lisovenko report from Donetsk, correspondents S. Troyan and V. Filippov report from Dnepropetrovsk, correspondent A. Solovyev report from Tomsk, and unidentified correspondent's report on comments by USSR Deputy Prime Minister L.D. Ryabev, under the general headline "Miners and Government: Is Compromise Attainable?"]

[Text] Donetsk—Talks between the sector's leaders and strike committee members have been revived in the last two days. In some places, in view of the critical situation of coal consumers, labor collective councils have decided to get back to work and simultaneously continue talks with the leadership on a wage increase.

Indeed, the rise in prices in the country has hit miners' pockets hard, and, of course, in some places norms and piecework rates need to be reviewed and everything that the strike committee members say should not be rejected outright.

As a result of the strike, output worth 100 million rubles [R] has been lost in Donetsk Oblast alone. Donetsk inhabitants have lost payments into the local budget amounting to R5 million. The stubbornness of the "Rodinskaya" miners now looks ridiculous—they who used scrap metal to block the railroad tracks to the pit's coal store, where thousands of tonnes of fuel mined long ago are stored. Why not hand it over to the consumers? After all, it will soon start to ignite spontaneously.

In short, talks must be held everywhere—in Moscow, in Kiev, and at [the] pits. This is the only way we can get out of the crisis.

Dnepropetrovsk—The Ukraine's metallurgists intend to hold their own protest action Wednesday 27 March.

Against what? We put this question to N. Minchenko, chairman of the Metallurgical and Mining Industry Workers Union Central Committee.

"We want to work normally to ensure that the units which metallurgists use to earn their livelihood do not collapse," Nikolay Nikolayevich replied. "Eight blast furnaces have already had to be shut down for lack of coke."

[IZVESTIYA] Are you trying to call miners to their senses by your action?

[Minchenko] We are ready to subscribe to the miners' demands. Prices have trebled, but only R60 compensation is being provided. A working man cannot survive on such a wage. The chairmen of the federations of miners, metallurgists, and machine builders have made a statement to Prime Minister Pavlov about the critical situation in base sectors of the economy because the government cannot find a common language with the miners. There has been no reply.

[IZVESTIYA] Do the metallurgists intend to strike 27 March?

[Minchenko] That would be tantamount to suicide. We will hold meetings between shifts and will discuss how to continue living. We will send cables to Pavlov expressing metallurgists' attitudes to the government.

Tomsk—At the Tomsk State Regional Electric Power Station No. 2, which supplies the city with electric power and heating, coal stocks have run out. To avoid a catastrophe, power workers have been forced to fully "load" boilers adapted to work on gas, but their capacities are insufficient. Breakdowns in heat supply have started occurring in the city.

"The 'Yaroslavskaya' Pit from the 'Kuznetskugol' Association pledged to deliver coal to us," M. Yavorskiy, Tomsk Oblast Soviet people's deputy, says. "Deliveries have ceased in connection with the strike. The chairman of our ispolkom [executive committee] sent a cable to Kemerovo Ispolkom warning: If miners do not resume coal deliveries we will be forced to limit our gas deliveries to the Kuzbass."

Let me note that only recently the leaders of both oblasts put their names to the Siberian agreement on mutually advantageous cooperation....

At the routine session of the oblast soviet in Tomsk that opened 25 March, the deputies expressed mixed attitudes to the miners' strike. There were mutual recriminations and "exhortations." For example, deputies who support the strike have been told by their colleagues to turn off the light and heat in their apartments... [Solovyev ends]

An IZVESTIYA reporter asked USSR Deputy Prime Minister L.D. Ryabev, who is responsible for the fuel and energy complex, to comment on these reports. First and foremost, how is the work of the commissions sent by the government to mining areas going? Is the cabinet ready to follow this up with new steps toward the strikers?

"I will begin by saying that this step toward the miners is not the first that has been taken to fulfill the government's well-known Resolution 608," L.D. Ryabev said. "Since the end of last year work in this direction has intensified. The miners' proposals are being thoroughly studied in the course of it. As a result, there is already not only concord but real progress on questions such as pay and pension provisions for a number of categories of personnel in the sector. These, however, are only some of the questions; work is continuing.

"I personally am meeting with the miners of Kizel today, and in the evening with members of the public-state commission of miners. There were also such meetings yesterday. Generally all this work is being carried out continuously and cannot be completed in one day. Certainly, of course, during it all no group of miners has been refused a meeting and not a single proposal has failed to receive attention."

New Savings Regulations To Be Put Into Effect

PM2703151391 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 26 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Interview with A.V. Voylukov, deputy chairman of the USSR State Bank Board, by G. Yastrebtsov under heading "Urgent Matter: Our Comment"; place and date not given: "Investment in the Savings Bank"—first paragraph is Yastrebtsov introduction]

[Text] The increase in retail prices naturally affects the interests of millions of our fellow citizens. Everyone is worried by the question: As a result of the coming reform, will their standard of living fall, will the compensations that have been announced make up for the impending losses that will be incurred through the price rise for food products and items of primary necessity? No less urgent is the question: What will happen to our investments in the country's savings banks—after all, the price increase will have a negative effect on the savings that people have entrusted to state institutions. Is this so?

"No, that's not right," A.V. Voylukov, deputy chairman of the USSR Gosbank [State Bank] Board, said in an interview with a PRAVDA reporter. "The decree issued by the country's President and published yesterday announced that the devaluation of monies invested in savings banks that will occur as a result of the increase and the freeing of prices will be compensated for virtually in full."

[Yastrebtsov] What is the total sum of money in savings books?

[Voylukov] There are approximately 222 million accounts containing 400 billion rubles [R]. Moreover, the vast majority of investments are relatively small—up to R10,000. I can say for sure that these are savings from earned income and not mafia billions; therefore, everything is being done to stop honest people from losing their hard-earned money.

[Yastrebtsov] How will this be done in practice?

[Voylukov] Gosbank has suggested to the government—and this suggestion has been accepted as the presidential decree also indicates—that additional bank accounts be opened for investors with a value of 40 percent of the the basic sum invested. Let us assume that you have R5,000 in your savings book. This means an additional account will be opened in your name for another R2,000.

[Yastrebtsov] What if I have not just one but several savings books?

[Voylukov] That is not important. Each investment will be multiplied by 40 percent.

[Yastrebtsov] When do I get to use this additional sum?

[Voylukov] You must understand, of course, that we are talking about very large figures. We are faced with setting up more than 220 million new current accounts. This will take several months. Regarding the additional investment itself, then as is stated in the Decree, it will take the form of a term deposit. Most of the monies will be invested for a three-year term at 7 percent annual interest, but it will be possible to withdraw up to R200 from any account after 1 July this year.

According to our calculations, compensation should cover the additional expenses that people incur as a result of the rise in prices of noncomestible category items.

[Yastrebtsov] Yes, but you and I do not have the right to withdraw the lump sum before the scheduled term has expired....

[Voylukov] We are only talking about the additional investment. Regarding the basic sum, the withdrawal limit of R500 per month has now been lifted. Every investor may withdraw from his account as much cash as he needs. Moreover, if he needs to pay for some major purchase, for example a car, an apartment, or a set of furniture, the bank will consider a request of this sort and issue a check that will take into account the additional investment received from the compensation. So it is not at all obligatory to wait until the promised three years are up.

[Yastrebtsov] Will commercial and private banks, which are becoming increasingly numerous in our country, act in a similar fashion?

[Voylukov] I cannot give a firm answer to this question. I am merely referring to state savings banks. Their commitments are underwritten by USSR Gosbank.

[Yastrebtsov] What can you tell us about securities?

[Voylukov] The USSR President's decree talks not only about the one-shot revaluation of the population's financial instruments that are invested in USSR Gosbank and USSR Savings Bank, but also about instruments invested in certificates, state treasury bills, and 1982 internal state lottery loan bonds. The value of these securities will also increase by 40 percent.

In conclusion I should like to stress that the state will receive virtually nothing as a result of the compensations related to the increase in retail prices and the savings guarantees. A little over R400 billion will be given directly back to the population of the country.

Trade Union Council Statement on Price Hikes

*914F0174A Moscow TRUD in Russian
23 Mar 91 p 1*

["Statement of the USSR General Confederation of Trade Unions Council Presidium on retail price reform and social protection of the population"]

[Text] According to the decree of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, dated 19 March 1991, retail price reform is being introduced as a measure necessary to eliminate the disparity in prices and to stabilize the consumer market. One cannot but notice, however, that the reform entails a considerable increase in people's spending, it puts many families in a serious economic predicament and lowers the level of real wages.

The VKP [USSR General Confederation of Trade Unions] Council wants to express its concern with the situation. The council considers it necessary for the governments of the USSR and the republics to take every measure to ameliorate the consequences of the price change. Basing on the interests of the working people, trade unions demand that every provision be made for advance payments of the required compensation, that sources be found for financing every enterprise and organization which does not have sufficient funds to allow a pay increase. The 10 percent income tax reduction granted to enterprises fails, in many cases, to cover even one-third of all the expenditures needed to pay the compensation to blue and white collar workers. Not a single case of a delay or a denial of a compensation payment may be allowed.

Trade unions are apprehensive that the stipulated growth of prices on goods and services will not arrest the "creeping" inflation. Residents of our capital and other cities fear the continuing policy of hikes in consumer prices without any compensation paid at all. For that reason, it is necessary to strengthen government control over the regulated retail prices on goods and services, as well as over pricing policies, and to not allow prices to rise above a set limit. Trade unions assume special control over the enforcement of the USSR president's decree with respect to its demand to present, within a period of one week, legislative acts on indexation of people's incomes and to provide a general definition of the minimum consumer budget.

To increase wages by adding compensation payments to them only does not mean to resolve the accumulated problems. In this respect, trade unions demand that a radical reform of work pay be conducted, starting in 1992 and based on the realistic cost of labor at the labor market.

The USSR VKP supports the workers' demand to cancel the five percent sales tax. Given the doubled and tripled retail prices, this sales tax causes misunderstanding and justified indignation among the people.

Trade unions are also concerned with the growing destruction of economic links, with the below-capacity work of enterprises or even complete work stoppages. This all leads to a sharp drop in wages and causes mass unemployment. The government and all administrative organizations should take immediate measures to normalize the economic functions and create realistic stimuli for productive labor.

The USSR VKP Council will take a most active position to protect the interests of the working people and of the entire population under a radical economic reform. Under the serious conditions of today we call upon the workers' collectives to display a maximum of self-restraint and to not allow any reduction or stoppage in production. If the economy comes to a standstill, all our hopes for a way out of the crisis will collapse. Only we will be able to feed the 300-million population.

Questions on Effects of Price Increase Answered

914A0556B Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian No 12, Mar 91 p 4

[Report on interview with unidentified "leaders" of the USSR State Committee on Prices, State Committee on Labor and Social Problems, Ministry of Finance, and State Bank by N. Zhelnorova, under the heading: "Prices Have Been Freed. When Will the Entire Economy Become Free?": "We Will Pay Any Price"]

[Text] [Zhelnorova] What kind of prices are we going to have?

[Answer] We are establishing three levels of prices: state **fixed** prices; no one can sell any commodities from state resources through state stores at prices higher than these.

Next come the **regulated** prices (15 percent of all goods) and **free** prices (30 percent of all goods). These categories will gradually include other categories of goods, with the exception of essentials.

[Zhelnorova] What is the difference between this system and the Goskomtsen [State Committee on Prices] proposals of 1987?

[Answer] The direction of the current position is closer to the market economy. We are witnessing a considerable shift toward liberalized pricing under the government control that happens while monopolization is still strong and the production competition is still weak.

[Zhelnorova] What concrete gains will this reform bring to the budget deficit?

[Answer] The price reform is being introduced with no fiscal goals in mind. We plan to channel the resources released under the reform into measures of social protection for our people. The general characteristics of the budget deficit will remain unchanged; however, a certain redistribution of the resources should take place among local budgets as the social protection measures and the reform gains do not quite "coincide" in certain republics.

[Zhelnorova] What are the general allocations for compensation? How will compensation responsibility be divided between the Union budget and the republic budgets?

[Answer] The total sum of compensation is about 300 billion rubles [R]. Out of that sum R75 billion should come from the Union budget and the rest from the republics. Any additional money received from the price reform will practically all go to the republic budgets. The Union budget should gain some R8 to R9 billion from the sales tax. The republic budgets will profit from the price reform by some R66 billion, as the profits should exceed the compensation.

[Zhelnorova] How can 30 percent of all goods become free? Will all the restrictive measures be canceled?

[Answer] The sales surcharge will be under control. Taking into account the monopolization of our trade, this surcharge will equal 20 percent of the sales price. The control bodies will have the right to suspend prices if they exceed any reasonable limits.

[Zhelnorova] What subsidies have been paid to the producers, because of increased wholesale and purchase prices and unchanged retail prices?

[Answer] Because of a disparity in those prices we had to pay to producers R70 to R80 billion. The price reform should cut budget subsidies by R125 billion.

[Zhelnorova] The increase in prices of certain goods will reach 300 percent while the compensation to the people is just 20 to 30 percent of their salaries. How much will the average living standard drop for the Soviet people?

[Answer] We view this increase in salaries as a minimum. We think that all enterprises will be given a certain stimulus to improve their performance and they will try to earn more money to buy all these commodities. We are removing all limitations on wages. Let everyone earn as much as he can. If we are paying R40 compensation to a child and R60 to an adult, it is obvious who benefits from this compensation. We are strengthening our social protection for those who cannot provide for themselves.

[Zhelnorova] What is the proportion between the demand and supply in consumer goods?

[Answer] The demand should drop by 15 to 20 percent as the prices will become a realistic yardstick allowing us to measure the value of goods and services. We estimate that the popular demand for consumer goods has not been satisfied to the sum of R160 to R200 billion. If you compare the unsatisfied demand and its reduction, you will get rather close figures. But there will occur certain devaluation of monetary savings.

[Zhelnorova] How will the price reform affect the quality of goods in our stores?

[Answer] The total amount of goods and services in the country is estimated at R520 billion. Subsidies, required for this year, for instance, if not for the reform, would have made up R225 billion. We have a warped price system under which the more goods are produced, the poorer the producer gets. Currently, 80 percent of commodities incur losses to their producers. The price reform should remove this powerful braking mechanism.

Because of the price reform the demand for consumer goods is expected to drop by R80 to R100 billion. Besides, our people have already stocked up on goods (not less than R50 to R100 billion worth of them) through their panic buying; therefore, the cumulative demand should drop also. The demand for periodical press, for instance, dropped by 34 percent because of the price hikes.

[Zhelnorova] Will our people receive any compensation at their savings bank deposits?

[Answer] We presently have approximately 222 million deposits with R400 billion in them. Ninety-three percent of them are below the R10,000 level. Deposits over R25,000 make up only 0.1 percent, both in total amount and in their number. This means that we practically do not have big deposits. For that reason, we should allow one-time compensation on all the deposits, approximately the same as the amount of manufactured goods increase (some 30 to 40 percent).

[Zhelnorova] We heard that the government plans to arrest inflation by freezing 50 percent of all enterprise assets and personal savings deposits?

[Answer] There is nothing of the kind in the government plans, except maybe one version of a revision of people's deposits in the savings banks. According to it, it is intended that the additional money (compensation on the deposits) will not be paid out at once but within a period of several years, so that it does not surface on the market immediately. Let us say that a deposit of R10,000 will be increased by R3,500; the owner will not be able to withdraw this R3,500 right away.

He will, however, be able to manage his R10,000 in any way that suits him. In this respect, the approach will differ depending on the amount of the deposits and other nuances.

[Zhelnorova] How will the price reform affect the shadow economy?

[Answer] You cannot escape shadow economy if you have a subsidy system. The people who distribute the goods or receive them for selling on the "black" market are the ones who profit from subsidies. As a result, the price reform deals a heavy blow to the "black" market. All our money goes to this market at present and it does not offer many goods. That explains the exorbitant prices.

[Zhelnorova] Does the government intend to use indexation or, in other words, tie up salaries with the price increase?

[Answer] We have not come to a final agreement on this issue yet. In such a case the inflation may spread onto the entire economy; however, some proposals on indexation have been prepared already and in the nearest future our country leadership will discuss them.

[Zhelnorova] The Lithuanian Government had to resign because of the price increase. If there is a similar reaction in the country, will the Union Government resign?

[Answer] The resignation may be demanded by the USSR Supreme Soviet or the government itself might resign. We have to take some more unpopular steps in future but we cannot leave these problems unresolved as was done by the previous government. After we have taken all the unpopular measures, we might return to the resignation issue.

Agricultural

Senko Reports 'Alarming' Agro-Industrial Crises

914B0129C Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 26 Mar 91 p 2

[Article by TASS legislative correspondents I. Novikov and V. Shishlin: "The Session: Commenting on the Topic of the Day"]

[Text] Life in the full sense of the word burst in on the Union legislature, which on 25 March was discussing the state of agriculture in conjunction with inquires of people's deputies troubled by the situation existing in the country's agro-industrial complex.

The morning meeting of the USSR Supreme Soviet began with a report by F.P. Senko, deputy prime minister of the USSR, who stated the point of view of the administration on the current problems of the countryside and talked about immediate measures to prepare for the spring field work. He characterized the situation as difficult and alarming.

In fact, production of agricultural output has dropped by more than five billion rubles, the first time this has happened in recent years. Naturally, the manufacture of food goods has also declined. As the speaker noted, some people are trying to use this situation for their own political goals and wish to shift all of the difficulties onto the Union organs. But whatever else is happening, the countryside is not striking or conducting rallies, and its efforts are directed toward resolving the main problem—how to feed the people.

The speaker detailed the deep causes for the negative processes taking place in the countryside. He named as the chief ones the continuing deterioration of material and technical support of the agricultural sector, the increasing dictate of "monopolistic enterprises," the collapse of economic ties, increasingly apparent localist tendencies, a decline in the discipline of deliveries, and a constant flow of the able-bodied rural population to the city.

Dwelling on the chief aspects of the development of the agro-industrial complex, the speaker noted that it is not for the countryside to solve all the problems by itself. It is necessary to repair the largely broken ties between the city and the countryside. Special attention should be allotted to the social reconstruction of the countryside. This task was put forward long ago, but it was not reinforced with decisive actions. The speaker called for a judicious approach to the question of privatization of property in the village, noting at that same time that the creation of new forms of farming alongside collective and state farms is a necessary and fruitful process.

Interregional Ties Cause Food Market 'Collapse'

914B0131A Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 26 Mar 91 p 4

[Report from RYNOK No. 1: "The Food Situation in the Cities Is Getting Worse and Worse"]

[Text] Information from the trade correspondents of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute to Study the Population's Demand for Consumer Goods and the State of Trade (VNIIKS) testifies to the complete collapse of the food market. One of the chief causes is the violation of interregional ties. As a result, targets for deliveries of food products to the all-Union fund are not fulfilled. At the same time, the plans for deliveries to the market funds of the republics are exceeded in the majority of instances. In search of a solution to the situation, city governments are increasingly trying different ways of introducing norms on food products.

Trade correspondents from the Ukrainian SSR note that the introduction of coupons has not improved the supply to the population and has only led to an increase in prices on kolkhoz [collective farm] markets. Despite expectations, the transition to contract prices has not given positive results either.

More on Commission on Food Distribution

914B0129B Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 26 Mar 91 p 2

[Unattributed report: "On the Formation of a Commission for the Operational Solution of Questions of Food Supply in 1991"]

[Text] By instruction of the USSR president, a commission chaired by F.P. Senko, deputy prime minister of the USSR, has been formed for the operational solution of questions connected with the implementation of the economic agreement of the USSR with the Union republics concerning 1991 deliveries of food and agricultural raw materials and the stable provision of the country's population with food goods.

The commission is made up of leaders of the central organs who are directly involved with the organization of production of food goods and the planning, financing, and crediting of enterprises and organizations of the agro-industrial complex, as well as leaders of a number of ministries and departments ensuring the production and delivery to the countryside of material and technical resources, the transportation of food goods, and their sale to the population.

The aforementioned commission is charged with regularly examining the state of affairs of the food supply and the production and deliveries of food goods throughout the country as a whole and in individual regions and with adopting specific rulings.

Agrarian Council Prescribes 'Multisector Economy'

LD2803061791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1828 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, 27 Mar (TASS)—A meeting of the CPSU Central Committee Agrarian Policy Commission took place today under the chairmanship of Yegor Stroyev, member of the Politburo, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. Issues connected with today's most vital problem—a cardinal change in the peasants' socioeconomic situation and a strengthening of the material base in the countryside—were examined.

Party organizations' attention is first and foremost riveted to improving the rural dwellers' living and working conditions, and showing constant concern for their needs. It was deemed useful to take most active part in the development and implementation of a program of social transformation of the countryside. It was persistently noted in the course of the exchange of views that the party comittees cannot lose the initiative in raising and assisting in the solution of specific questions of development of the agrarian policy and maintaining parity between the town and the countryside.

A useful exchange of views on the course of the land reform in the country took place. The participants in the discussion reached a unanimous decision—it is necessary to promote in every way the process of fashioning a multi-sector economy. This process is directly connected with a transfer to market relations in the countryside. The members of the commission consider it impermissible to use the restructuring of land relations for confronting different forms of ownership and whipping up extremist tendencies for purposes of ambition. Local party bodies are oriented at supporting legislative acts on land relations reform and strengthening the role of party organizations in their implementation in practice.

The attention of communists-leaders of the USSR gosplan, USSR Gossnab, USSR Finance Ministry, and other departments was drawn to the necessity to strengthen control over the ensuring of equivalent exchange between agriculture, and the agro-industrial complex as a whole, and other areas of the national economy complex, to improve the deliveries of material resources and to meet other requirements of the producers of foodstuffs.

The commission worked out recommendations for party committees on issues that had been discussed.

14-27 Mar Agricultural Developments Reported

LD2803055191

[Editorial Report] The following is a compilation of reports on agricultural developments in the USSR carried by Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian from 14-27 March. Times of broadcast, given in GMT, are in parentheses at the end of each item.

14-20 March

No significant developments reported.

21-24 March

No significant developments reported.

25 March

Kazakhstan is concluding the preparation of the equipment for spring field works. The soviet and collective farms of the republic have 250,000 tractors and 220,000 of them are ready today for work in the fields. The harrowing of the fields, the feeding of the winter crops and of all the early spring crops has already begun in the Chimkent and Dzhambul oblasts of Kazakhstan. All in all the mechanizers of the republic are to carry out sowing works on almost 30 million hectares this spring. (0900)

The sugar refining season is over at the sugar factories of the Altay. During the autumn and winter months 660,000 tonnes of sugar beets was processed without losses: out of them over 70,000 tonnes of sugar was obtained.

The sugar content of the sugar beet was over 10 percent, which in the conditions of Siberia is considered a good result. The four sugar factories in Altay kray are now preparing for processing Cuban sugar cane raw materials which will arrive here in a fairly large quantity in April and May. (2230)

26-27 March

No significant developments reported.

Military

Yazov Addresses Political Officers

PM2803091591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 26 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Report by unnamed correspondent: "Urgent Tasks Discussed"]

[Text] A meeting has been held involving leaders of military-political bodies of the various branches of the armed services, branches of the army, military districts, groups of forces and fleets, formations, and military academies, and deputy chiefs for military-political work in Defense Ministry main and central directorates.

The participants in the meeting discussed the report made by Colonel General N.I. Shlyaga, chief of the USSR Armed Forces Main Military-Political Directorate, on the tasks facing military-political bodies at the final stage of their reform, they exchanged opinions on problems in military-political work in the current sociopolitical situation, and analyzed the situation in army and navy party organizations on the eve of the All-Army Party Conference.

At the meeting, Marshal of the Soviet Union D.T. Yazov, USSR minister of defense, analyzed the international military-political situation, the state of the combat and political training of troops and naval forces, and military discipline.

Far East District Party Conference Held

PM2703144791 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 23 Mar 91 First Edition p 2

[Report by unnamed correspondent under the rubric "Party Conferences" and the general heading "Following the Process of Renewal"]

[Text] Army General V. Arkhipov, deputy defense minister and chief of the USSR Armed Forces Rear Services; Ye. Makhov, acting chairman of the CPSU Central Control Commission; and representatives of the Khabarovsk Kray, and Sakhalin and Amur Oblast party organizations, participated in the conference of the Far East Military District CPSU organizations.

The report made by Lieutenant General A. Voronik, chief of the district Military Political Directorate, and speeches made by Colonel A. Smirnov, Major I. Khomutinnik, and others, mentioned basic trends in the activity of party committees in the implementation of CPSU military policy.

Airborne Troops Party Conference Held

PM2703143591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 23 Mar 91 First Edition p 2

[Colonel V. Luchin report under the rubric "Party Conferences" and the general heading "Following the Process of Renewal"]

[Text] The Airborne Troops' party conference has been held. In the report and speeches, the delegates to the conference confirmed their adherence to the socialist choice and a communist future, and they expressed their support for the preservation of the Union and the united Armed Forces.

Colonel General V. Achalov, USSR deputy defense minister; Lieutenant General P. Grachev, commander of Airborne Troops; and Ye. Kopyshev, a senior official from the CPSU Central Committee, addressed the delegates to the party conference.

Air Defense Party Conference Views Gulf War

91UM0493A Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 22 Mar 91 First Edition p 2

[Article by KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent Colonel A. Ladin: "Prepared Statements From the Podium, Honest Talk in the Lobby"]

[Text] **Not a word was said from the podium regarding the war in the Persian Gulf and its lessons at this party conference. However, these events were discussed in the lobby in a very lively manner...**

This was particularly the case concerning the action tactics of the multinational forces and the air defense system of Iraq.

Lieutenant Colonel V. Taboyakov told me: "Newspapers with reports from the combat zone are read to the last letter. Our specialists are the first ones to discuss everything containing assessments and conclusions. We evaluate many things as they relate to us, to the conditions in which our alert duty takes place.

Delegates to the conference, communists Colonel A. Selifonov, Major Ye. Butenko, Lieutenant Colonel N. Shapoval, Senior Lieutenants I. Savras and V. Khodyrev, and Major General V. Kokorev responded to my question on how the lessons of the war in the Middle East were being studied just as heatedly.

It turned out that the people were concerned about these issues very much. The conscience and honor of the officers alone prompted them to look around, grope and make sure yet again that our own defense weaponry was in place and at the ready, that our guard was not down, and that the gunpowder to which we attach hopes was dry. The delegates to the conference asked whether some of the politicians with pacifist leanings are in too much of a hurry to slash the military budget and improve economic matters at the expense of the defense capability of the state.

All of those we happened to talk to did not have their heads in the clouds; they were aware and appreciated how difficult the life of our people is, and what the condition of our economy is. However, they also had the other pole before their eyes which produced stress and caused their conscience to truly rebel. This was a pole of incongruence with regard to the unfolding international events. One of our interlocutors said: "Perhaps, we will not win anything even if our security suffers just a little. I dare say it will suffer, after all."

Alas, the delegates to the conference made their arguments, once again, in the lobby. In our country, PVO [air defense] forces are being cut along the state border. Over there, in that war, the force of the most modern weaponry was demonstrated. What about our country? Military science and our "defense" are in a lamentable condition because in some cases there is nothing to ensure the fastest possible delivery of the necessary models of weaponry to the defense structure.

As the delegates to the conference told me, they are aware that at present the country's PVO badly needs to be upgraded with the most up-to-date systems, and obsolete models of weapons which accomplish little, as evidenced by the war in the Persian Gulf area, should be retired from the order of battle. It is obvious that along with a reduction of the Ground Forces, PVO power should increase, its combat deployment should be made denser. The defense of air borders is needed which will withstand any surprise by a possible aggressor.

As Colonel A. Selifonov, a delegate to the party conference, told me, at present our air defense missile units are under strength to such a degree that at times it becomes impossible to carry out missions in the course of combat firing.

Such is the truth of life, a harsh truth which smacks of our unconcern.

The poor social and living conditions of missile personnel are a problem for this and other PVO units. They room for a long time with other people or, as does Lieutenant V. Akhmetualiyev, a team chief, behind a partition in a corner of the unit headquarters. Those who have families or do not have quarters live in the similarly adapted corners of the soldiers' barracks. How long can one last this way, taking into account their intense service which makes them be, as they put it, "at peak readiness," on the alert? Should we explain why requests for separation are filed by young specialists in whose absence the PVO as an armed service is doomed to a sad future?

To be sure, they mentioned from the podium a shortage of spare parts for materiel and stations which should have long been scrapped. In the large unit alone, such "assets" account for up to 30 percent. They evaluated what can be done by the units themselves. Nonetheless, a linkage to major problems which at present literally stir up our life did not get established, despite the communists striving for it. By now, they have all pertinent rights. For example, the Instructions on the Operation of the CPSU in the Armed Forces stress that the party committees are independent. Probably, this needs to be interpreted as saying that the party committees now elected in the large air defense missile unit for the first time will not be bound by service subordination.

Senior Lieutenant Savras, a team chief, observed: "We still have not grasped the fact that we are now present at the elections of a qualitatively new party committee."

Unfortunately, this time it did not come to a principled discussion of how the delegates to the conference view their new party committee. It appeared to me that the local political organ was also to blame. After all, it was the one to prepare the conference this time. There is no concealing that the conference was organized in the old manner: Prearranged speakers sought to discuss precisely the issues which were not too thorny or big: Why discuss things which are not resolved "at our level?" It appears that nobody as much as entertained the thought of saying something unflattering about someone from superior echelons. However, this was necessary.

Well, a serious test by deeds lies ahead for the new party committee and the communists.

Participation in Draft Union Treaty Viewed

LD2303145891 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1200 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Interview with Deputy Defense Minister Army General Valentin Ivanovich Varennikov, Ground Forces commander, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given; on the "Armed Forces and Society" program—live or recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Tell me, please, did the highest military leadership take part in drawing the new draft Union treaty?

[Varennikov] Needless to say, only the direct participation of the Defense Minister and the General Staff ensured the correct posing of all defense questions in the treaty. Now, we must bear in mind the new strategic position of the Soviet state and the changes that have occurred in the structure of the Armed Forces.

[Correspondent] Valentin Ivanovich, you are an Army general, an experienced warrior, and a worldly person. How do you link the further destiny of the Soviet Armed Forces with the Union treaty, with the destiny of our Union?

[Varennikov] You know, I should say that, as we deal with that question today, we must turn to history, at least a little. You know, Ivan Kalita began to gather our great Rus together. In 1242, the Teutonic knights were routed. There was the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380. If our warriors had not stood in the way of Mamay's hordes, we don't know how history would have treated Europe. Alternatively, if one takes 1709, there is the Battle of Poltava, the defeat of the Swedes near Poltava. There is the Patriotic War of 1812, and, finally, the Great Patriotic War. Different ages, different scales. But, in all this there is a single unifying theme. We triumphed in all those battles only because we were together. We were united. Today, as we talk about what we should do in order to preserve our great state, to preserve the sovereignty of our great state, we must, of course, be concerned for the unity of our people, for the unity of our Armed Forces. Then we can be sure that our future will be good.

Baltic Republics

TASS Analyst Views Moscow-Baltic Talks

LD2703155491 Moscow TASS in English 1322 GMT 27 Mar 91

[By TASS international news analyst Albert Balebanov]

[Text] Moscow March 27 TASS— President of the Estonian parliament Arnold Ruutel leaves on a visit for the United States today. According to the Estonian news agency ETA, he will meet President Bush and hand over the Baltic Council's address containing the proposal for a large-scale international conference on the Baltic question.

The Estonian leader is also going to ask the U.S. Administration "to bring pressure to bear on the USSR so that talks with the Baltic republics be opened sooner."

Going by the ETA report, the current Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian leaders are prepared to go to any lengths to impart an international character to a domestic problem and to use the West as a lever for pressure on the Soviet Union to achieve the expected results.

It is also apparent that while talking about their intention to negotiate with the Soviet Government, the Baltic leaders are actually doing everything to put off the negotiations and complicate them.

First Deputy of the USSR Prime Minister Vitaly Doguzhiyev told reporters in Moscow on Tuesday that Lithuanian leaders are trying to put off the Vilnius-Moscow negotiations. He emphasised that the Soviet Government has no intention of hampering the solution of the matter at the talks.

Doguzhiyev warned that if the negotiations continue to be postponed he will officially approach the Soviet president and parliament and propose that either they intervene or call off the negotiations.

Facts show that each time the Lithuanian leaders either oppose the Union government or back off from what has already been achieved. This indicates that Vilnius is interested in perpetuating, not removing, tension in relations with Moscow.

It is clear that the current Baltic leaders are trying to speed up the decision on their republic's independence by elevating to an international level the conflict with the USSR leadership which they themselves started.

But this would seem to be inappropriate. It is not accidental that Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, like many foreign leaders before him, told former head of the Lithuanian Government Kazimiera Prunskiene in Vienna on Tuesday that the question of the Baltic republics quitting the USSR can only be decided through dialogue with Moscow.

A dialogue is envisaged by a constitutional process of secession from the USSR. The sooner this is realised in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn, the sooner the talks with Moscow will be started.

Estonian Group in Moscow for Sovereignty Talks

LD2703211791 Moscow TASS in English 1923 GMT 27 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Budris]

[Text] Moscow March 27 TASS—An official Estonian delegation, led by parliament Speaker Julo Nugis, arrived in Moscow today. The delegation will meet a Soviet delegation, set up under the Soviet president's decree on February 1.

"Estonia will conduct talks only on one subject: restoring the republic's state sovereignty," Nugis told TASS. If there is no mutual understanding, it will leave Moscow, he added.

Nugis said that the Soviet side was familiar with the Estonian position, but "it has not accepted it" until now. The Soviet side insisted only on "discussing a complex of political, social and economic matters", as it is set out in the president's decree.

Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Laverov, who heads the Soviet delegation, said recently "discussions might grow into talks".

Estonia, like the two other Baltic Republics Lithuania and Latvia, declared independence last spring. The relevant republican bills were declared null and void by the Soviet president's decrees. A referendum was held in Estonia on March 3, in which the majority of residents of the republic favoured "restoring state independence of the republic". Nearly 90 per cent of more than 250,000 people, who took part in the March 17 referendum in the republic, voted for preserving the USSR.

Ruutel Receives UK Parliamentarians

LD2103181691 Tallinn Estonian Television Network in Estonian 1900 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] The delegation of members of the British House of Commons which arrived in Tallinn yesterday was received today at the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. First and foremost the visitors were interested in the political situation and in the January events in the Baltics. They were also interested in how they could assist in Estonia becoming independent. Arnold Ruutel noted that if a country as prestigious as Britain were to influence the Soviet Union to enter into negotiations with the Baltic states, it could bring notable benefits. At the same time direct links with the Baltic states could be set up, perhaps in setting up information centers. A bilateral protocol would be beneficial; it would emphasize once again that the nonrecognition policy is being continued on the issue of Estonian annexation. The protocol could also say that the democratically elected

Estonian Supreme Soviet and documents adopted by the legislature are being recognized. The ending of the protocol should note that once independence is attained, the restored Republic of Estonia will be recognized. This way the Baltic issue would become an international issue and British diplomatic relations with Estonia would be restored.

Mr. Arnold Ruutel informed the visitors that the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries have begun to organize an international conference on the Baltic issue, and that if Britain supported the idea of taking the issue of Stalinist mass murders and repressions to the human rights commission it would constitute a considerable step forward within a peaceful solution of the Baltic issue.

This afternoon the visitors left Estonia.

Riga Closes Lenin, Revolution Museums

LD2803084291 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0800 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] It is reported from Riga that the signs have been removed from the Vladimir Ilich Lenin Museum in the Latvian capital. By order of the republic's minister of culture, the memorial museum complex has been closed. A museum of Latvian social-democratic development is being set up in its place. The Ministry of Culture has also closed the Museum of the Revolution. It will be replaced by a military museum.

Doguzhiyev, Stankevicius View Stalled Talks

LD2703143691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1950 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, 26 Mar (TASS)—Vitaliy Doguzhiyev, USSR first deputy prime minister, places the blame for the protracted nature of the talks between Lithuania and the Soviet Union on the Lithuanian leadership. In an interview with a group of journalists today, he declared that there is no need for new consultations with Lithuanian representatves, since the schedule for the talks is already agreed.

As has already been reported, Vitaliy Doguzhiyev, who heads the delegation appointed by the USSR president to discuss a complex of political, social, and economic matters with the Lithuanian representatives, sent Vytautas Landsbergis, chairman of the Lithuanian legislature, a telegram proposing that talks should be held in the Kremlin on 26 March.

The three members of the Lithuanian delegation, led by Ceslovas Stankevicius, first deputy head of the Lithuanian Supreme Council, arrived in Moscow today.

Vitaliy Doguzhiyev stated that the Soviet side "no longer intends to drag out the resolution of the question of talks." He agreed to meetings of working groups only after agreement on the date of the meeting of plenipotentiary delegations. According to Doguzhiyev, if there is any further postponement to the start of talks, he will present "an official notification to the president and to the USSR Supreme Soviet," and will propose that they "intervene in resolving the matter, or sanction the ending of the talks."

Ceslovas Stankevicius, speaking this evening at a press conference in Lithuania's permanent mission in Moscow, expressed regret over Vitaliy Doguzhiyev's rejection of a meeting with the Lithuanian representatives. At the same time, Stankevicius rejected accusations voiced by Vitaliy Doguzhiyev to the effect that the Lithuanian side "is putting forward preconditions." When calling for the start of talks, he noted, Lithuania had not even damanded the prior return to the republic of the military installations that had been seized, which, in Stankevicius's view, would have been logical. According to him, the matter can be settled in parallel with the talks.

Ceslovas Stankevicius announced that the Lithuanian side would continue to work actively to renew the dialogue with the USSR.

As was announced at the news conference, another group of deputies from the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet met today in Moscow with Boris Pugo, USSR minister of internal affairs, and Aleksey Vasilyev, USSR first deputy procurator general. Romualdas Ozolas, a Lithuanian legislature deputy and the republic's former vice premier, told journalists that the subject of the meeting was the "unlawful and illegal," as he put it, actions of the detachment of USSR Interior Ministry special-purpose militia in Lithuanian and of Petrauskas, the procurator of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Lithuanian Deputies on Talks With Pugo

LD2703214291

[Editorial Report] Vilnius Radio Vilnius in Lithuanian at 1410 GMT on 27 March carries a 40-minute program entitled "The State Studio" with Deputy Zita Slicyte, member of the Standing Commission of Defense and Internal Affairs, and Deputy Egidisus Klumbys, deputy chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission, presented by editor Vytas Usas.

Usas reports that Slicyte and Klumbys, together with Deputy Ozolas, visited Moscow yesterday where they met with Internal Affairs Minister Boris Pugo and his deputy, Demidov, and visited the Soviet Procuracy.

Describing her meeting with Pugo and his deputy, Slicyte states: "The esteemed internal affairs minister and his deputy explained that the OMON [Special Purpose Militia Unit] men have sworn an oath to the Soviet Union, they have sworn to adhere to its Constitution, and therefore in Lithuania they are adhering to their oath, and the Soviet Internal Affairs Ministry would not like to prevent them from adhering to their oath."

Deputy Klumbys says: "First of all, Minister Pugo stated that in Lithuania—he wanted to say the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, but we said that the Republic of Lithuania is now in existence, and that there cannot be two militias in Lithuania. He stated that the Lithuanian police should belong to the system of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. I also wish to say that the minister [words indistinct] all the processes and is sufficiently familiar with our police law. This shows that they are especially interested in all the processes taking place in Lithuania and [words indistinct].

"Pugo also said that the talk would be completely different if Lithuania left the USSR. This is very interesting because such a highly placed party official as Pugo, who has been chairman of the Party Control Committee, is calmly discussing the issue of Lithuania's leaving the Soviet Union.

"Pugo also stated that the OMON (?should be subordinate to Lithuania's police). Then he said that the task of the OMON is to fight crimes and, in his opinion, it should find a place in Lithuania, stressing that Russia is completely unable to [words indistinct]. The situation is very tragic.

"Pugo said that he is unwilling to have the OMON as a subunit of the Internal Affairs Ministry.

"I want to stress that deputy Ozolas clearly told Minister Pugo that the OMON in Lithuania is not adhering to the USSR Constitution. In order to find some mutual trust one of the signs of such trust should be that in Lithuania the OMON adheres to the USSR Constitution. This would be a minimum requirement. After Minister Pugo agreed with this we stated, and Romualdas Ozolas stressed this, that if the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is at present the real master of this OMON, will not cope with it and if excesses will continue in Lithuania, we will be compelled to take strict measures in response. [passage indistinct]

"After esteemed Zita had a personal conversation with Pugo and expressed her wish that the minister do everything possible and handed him a collection of our laws, Pugo stated very clearly that the OMON should observe the USSR Constitution, and that it will be his duty as a minister to ensure that this happens.

Klumbys continues: "In view of the fact that it was a goodwill talk between the two sides, three theses were formulated. The first is that the OMON has to return the seized weapons to Lithuania's police, and Demidov agreed with this. The second is that a contact commission of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs should be set up as soon possible for negotiations with the Lithuanian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The third is that the OMON should receive instructions to the effect that it cannot act according to its wishes, and that it has to observe the USSR Constitution."

Deputy Slictyte says that the USSR procurator general did not receive them personally. She adds: "We were advised to talk to First Deputy Procurator General Vasilyev." "He was not favorably inclined toward us and our main claim," she comments.

Slicyte describes actions by the Soviet authorities, condoned by the USSR Procuracy, in preventing medical aid being given to wounded people. She continues: "I think that a talk in the Procuracy is yet to take place. Maybe, we ourselves were insufficiently prepared. We will have to talk to the procurator general himself."

Slicyte says: "I wish to say that our talk with Boris Pugo impressed me because Boris Pugo told us several times that what has happened in Latvia will not happen with the OMON men in Lithuania. In Latvia, he said, the OMON men have become heroes. I tried to explain to him several times that the OMON men will not be heroes in Lithuania. Today they are already regarded as hangmen in Lithuania. After what they have done, people in Lithuania will never call them heroes. They are hangmen, and their activity is criminal.

She adds: "The esteemed minister, when we invited him to become personally acquainted with the situation and with all the OMON's criminal actions in Lithuania, tried to joke, saying that he would be detained in Lithuania because criminal proceedings have been instituted against him by the Lithuanian Procuracy. We told him that this case is not against him but against his subordinates."

Landsbergis Accuses Soviets of 'Wrecking' Talks

LD2703214791 Moscow TASS in English 2124 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Vilnius March 27 TASS—Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis has favoured "serious and constructive talks" on restoring inter-state relations between Lithuania and the Soviet Union.

At the same time, in his address aired today by independent Lithuanian radio, Landsbergis accused the Soviet side of wrecking a meeting between representatives from the two sides' delegations that was scheduled for Tuesday. "The Soviet Union has broken the process of talks and launched an offensive," he said.

A meeting of part of the Lithuanian delegation, led by Vice-President Ceslovas Stankevicius, with Soviet First Deputy Prime Minister Vitaliy Doguzhiyev, heading the Soviet delegation, was expected to be held in Moscow on Tuesday.

According to Doguzhiyev, the Lithuanian side was to blame for breaking the meeting, as it had not responded to his appeal to resume talks on Tuesday and set preliminary conditions for holding it. He said the Lithuanian side's preliminary conditions prevented the delegations from switching from consultative meetings to official talks last year.

Stankevicius told a news conference here today that the Soviet Union's demand to resolve all issues between

Lithuania and the Soviet Union within the framework of the Soviet Constitution and in accordance with the mechanism for secession "is a preliminary condition."

Stankevicius was optimistic about the possibility of talks. Speaking about prospects for the Lithuania-Soviet dialogues, he noted that "talks will begin anyway." He said that the Lithuanian side expected a response from Moscow to its proposal to begin talks in Vilnius within the next few days, and it will press for talks to begin as soon as possible.

RSFSR

Congress of People's Deputies Convenes 28 Mar

Deputies Preview Session

PM2703204691 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 28 Mar 91 First Edition pp 1-2

[Report by correspondent Ye. Sorokin on interviews with RSFSR people's deputies under the "PRAVDA Express Poll" rubric: "Russian Congress: Much Work Ahead"]

[Excerpts] The Third Extraordinary Congress of RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] People's Deputies begins in the Kremlin today. It has to adopt a number of very important laws and express its attitude to the draft Union treaty and draft federal treaty. How will the congress go? What do the deputies expect from it? What atmosphere would they like to see there? RSFSR people's deputies answered these questions for PRAVDA's correspondent. [passage omitted]

R. Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet:

I think the congress will be very complex. I am afraid that debates will begin that are not of particular concern to the people at the moment.

What would I like to see? We have been able to prepare for the congress. The main item on the agenda is the report of the supreme soviet chairman on Russia's political and socioeconomic situation and how to find our way out of the state of crisis. The supreme soviet committees and commissions and all the Russian structures have done everything possible to ensure that we reach sober, well-considered decisions aimed at finding a way out of a very difficult situation.

But Russia's economy is part of our integrated Soviet economy. And even within the framework of a very large republic like the RSFSR, it is virtually impossible to resolve all the problems unless we have an integrated economic policy. Therefore all our proposals and our entire complex system of relations with the central administration are aimed at seeking united positions. Unfortunately we do not by any means always succeed in this, although we try to meet the center halfway.

I am particularly concerned about agriculture. It is being driven into a corner with increased prices on all the goods that are necessary for normal agricultural activity. I am an advocate of strengthening the kolkhozes' and sovkhozes' material and technical base, not destroying them. The future belongs to large-scale agro-industrial sovkhozes and kolkhozes. But the potential of peasant farms and private farms must also be exploited now.

About the federal treaty. We have adopted it as a basis. I showed it to A.I. Lukyanov. He had serious and, in my view, justified comments. But we would like it to be adopted, even with these shortcomings. In this way we would regularize relations within the Russian Federation.

On 25 March the congress commission—120 people—had a special session on the Union treaty. In general we found a basis for a united viewpoint to take to the congress. If we were to succeed in obtaining the support of congress, the work of concluding the Union treaty would progress. I am a firm supporter of concluding this treaty.

I personally will try to do everything to ensure that the congress proceeds on a businesslike footing. And does not drag on. Well, you will agree that this is no time for protracted congresses. We are all worried about the upsurge of rallies and strikes in the country. I think that at the moment, when the economy is gasping its last, strikes only play into the hands of destructive forces. I would like to call on the miners and all other working people not to strike. In general I am opposed to extreme measures.

Now, about Russia's former autonomous formations. I think we will come to terms. Everyone says we are not doing good work. But let us compare things. I mean no offense, but the small republics are in the grip of national conflicts, yet a complex one like Russia is resolving these problems. I therefore believe that we will also be able to come to terms with the republics at the Congress.

In general I am sure the congress will adopt good, well-considered decisions. We will be forced to seek consensus, becuase, in the president's words, we are all in the same boat. The main thing is to put these decisions into practice.

Democratic Bloc Deputies Interviewed

LD2703214191 Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian 1540 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Interview with Vyacheslav Volkov, Anatoliy Shabad, and Leonid Gurevich, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, RSFSR, people's deputies from the Democratic Russia bloc, by RSFSR People's Deputy Igor Zbronzhko; place and date not given; from the "Legislative Herald of Russia" program—recorded]

[Text] [Zbronzhko] Good evening. The RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies is approaching. Various blocs and groupings of deputies, communists, and democrats are preparing for it, even though this congress is being assembled specifically on the initiative of, let's say, that section of our bloc of deputies which belongs both to the bloc of communists, and to some kind of center, and to the Russia group. [as heard] In this connection, how are we, I mean the members of the Democratic Russia bloc, preparing?

[Volkov] First, the Democratic Russia bloc's organizing council which was set up to prepare for the congress has for two weeks already been both discussing in general the approach to the agenda which has been drawn up, considering the points contained in it, and talking on all levels on how this forum is to be held. Above all we have reached the opinion that the duration of the congress should be limited, that we should propose that it be completed within a maximum of five to seven days. This proceeds primarily from the premise, as you correctly noted, that it has been imposed. At the same time, however, we must not evade the question which, let's say, is dictated to us by life—the question of the presidency and the results of the referendum.

In addition to all the issues which we intend in general to narrow down in discussion—I am not talking about the need for them, for they are all necessary—after narrowing down these issues we still plan to submit this question acting solely on the premise that this is the people's decision. Without the reconstruction of state power in Russia, both legislative and executive, it is simply impossible to think of any further progress on the economic plane without solving this political question because we are bound hand and foot by the center, and Russia simply needs a strong executive authority.

[Zbronzhko] The second and third points at this congress will probably be signing the Union and federation treaties, won't they? How do you assess the draft treaty which has been published in the press and which it is planned to sign?

[Shabad] The draft Union treaty which has been published is unsatisfactory. The point is that it completely emasculates the idea of the sovereignty of the states signing it. Although the word sovereignty is present, we have grown accustomed to not attaching importance to the words which we pronounce. Meanwhile, the question: Do you vote for sovereignty?—was also asked in the referendum. The main thing which invalidates the signature of Russian representatives on this draft is the fact that it completely contradicts the declaration on state sovereignty adopted by the first RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies with such general and impressive enthusiasm. Now, without annulling that declaration or disputing it, they are simply trying to give the impression that it does not exist, in order not to arouse any irritation.

[Gurevich] the fact is that there is a deep, solid layer in what my colleague has said. I mean that they are issues of state and the law, constitutional issues. In any event, the political situation now is such that this has been receding into the background, in my opinion, since the autonomous formations in the Russian Federation were invited to work on the union treaty and to sign it. The point is that in this instance we will simply get the complete disintegration of the Russian Federation and I, for example, can in no way accept that. Why? Even proposals to establish a Russian republic have cropped up in connection with this.

Ivan Stepanovich Silayev has already answered that question. He is categorically against it. I also support him here, because the actual process of setting up a Russian republic, its mechanism, is completely unclear. From which territorial formations will this republic be formed, in its turn? I am from Murmansk Oblast, so let us look at Karelia, which is next door. Only about eight percent of the local population living there are Karelians. All the rest of the population is Russians and representatives of other nationalities in the Union. How is that repubic to be resolved? How are we to resolve other republics which also do not have a clearly expressed ethnic character? And even if they do, the point is that the actual process of forming such a territorial state will immediately bring with it the problems which we now have at the level of the whole union.

[Volkov] I personally am convinced that the Russian state must be based no on a treaty but on a constitution. We will naturally get there. It is a pity about the time, and it is a pity that the adoption of Russia's new constitution which has been published is being postponed once more. I believe that the more quickly we discuss the concept of this new constitution nationwide and adopt it at a congress, the more quickly we will solve all the issues which are now arising.

Communist-'Democratic Russia' Debate

LD2703221391 Moscow TASS in English 2153 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—Hundreds of millions of televiewers on Wednesday night watched a debate between representatives of opposite political trends. The debate was broadcast live by the Soviet Central Television Network on the eve of an extraordinary Congress of Russia's People's Deputies, opening on Thursday. Like Tuesday's televised address by President Mikhail Gorbachev, the Wednesday telecast continued for about one hour and a half.

The debate involved Ivan Antonovich, secretary of the central committee and member of the politburo of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee, Yuriy Afanasyev, co-chairman of the coordinating council of the Democratic Russia movement and one of the leaders of the opposition in the USSR parliament, Aleksandr Maltsev, leader of the Nizhny Novgorod city organisation of the Soviet Communist Party, and Stepan Sulakshin, co-chairman of the coordinating council of the Republican Party of Russia.

At the Congress of People's Deputies, the Democratic Russia movement will support the idea of introducing the post of a president of the Russian Federation and will press for an agrarian problem solution as it was outlined in the Russian parliament programme, Afanasyev said.

He criticised as "anti-constitutional" the central authorities' latest decisions aimed at limiting rallies and demonstration on the days of the congress.

Antonovich dismissed accusations by opponents that the congress is being convened ostensibly on a demand from the communists with a view to toppling Russian parliament leader Boris Yeltsin.

At the congress, communists set themselves as an object to find out the causes of the current crisis and hear the republican leadership's account of its activities over the past year, he said.

If Yeltsin suggests a constructive programme for economic reforms, communists will participate in a constructive discussion of it, Antonovich added.

During the discussion, there was a clash of opinions between the advocates and opponents of the socialist idea, adherents of rally-type democracy and those who are convinced that restoring order in the economy is now the priority.

Gorbachev Reportedly To Address Body

LD2703225391 Belgrade TANJUG in English 2144 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, March 27 (TANJUG)—Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will address the special congress of deputies the Russian Federation which opens in Moscow tomorrow, the INTERFAX news agency reports this evening, quoting sources close to the Russian Communist Party.

The cabinet of Mikhail Gorbachev has not confirmed the report, but it is realistic to expect that the Soviet president should address the gathering. The situation in the country is tense, and differences between the federal leadership and the leadership of the Russian Federation have attained the proportions of an open conflict.

The convention of the special congress of deputies, the highest legislative body in the Russian Federation, has been initiated by the deputies of the Russian Communist Party to the republican parliament.

At their initiative, Boris Yeltsin is tomorrow to submit a report on his work as president of parliament, to which post he was elected in mid-1990.

Yeltsin's supporters, specifically deputies of the Democratic Russia bloc of parties, view the convention of the special congress as an attempt to remove him from office. Democratic Russia leaders claim that they are the opposition to the Russian Communist Party which they describe as a pillar of the conservative wing of the Soviet Communist Party.

In response to the convention of congress and as a sign of support for Yeltsin a (?rally has) been called for tomorrow in central Moscow. Despite the federal government's ban of the rally, the democratic Russia leaders continue to invite the people to attend.

Spokesmen for security organs say that they will carry out the government order and prevent demonstrants from reaching the square where the rally should be held.

Session Opens Amid Disagreement

LD2803083591 Moscow TASS in English 0817 GMT 28 Mar 91

[By a TASS legislative correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—The Third Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation opened in the Kremlin today. It was demanded by a group of deputies who disagree with the Russian leadership's policy.

Opening the congress, chairman of the Russian parliament Boris Yeltsin said that 1,028 out of 1,063 people's deputies of Russia had arrived for the congress, but only 947 were present in the hall.

The very first minutes of the congress showed that sharp political debates were unavoidable. Right after it opened, a draft resolution was submitted on behalf of 220 deputies, calling to annul the USSR Cabinet's decision to ban meetings and demonstrations in Moscow from March 26 to April 15. The resolution triggered angry shouts and boos from deputies who disagreed with the motion.

In keeping with parliamentary rules, it was decided to discuss the draft after the congress's working bodies were formed.

The congress is to discuss a report by Yeltsin "On the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in the Russian Federation and Measures To Overcome the Crisis." A vote of no confidence may be proposed during deliberations to decide Yeltsin's fate.

The draft agenda includes deliberations on Russia's national and state structure (federal treaty) and on the Union treaty. The final agenda has yet to be adopted.

The extraordinary congress is expected to end on April 2.

Details of Opening Session

LD2803080391

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian at 0655 GMT on 28 March begins to carry the live opening session of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, RSFSR, congress of people's deputies from the Kremlin in Moscow.

At 0700 GMT deputies are take their seats in the hall. There is applause as RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin and his deputies take their seats on the platform. Yeltsin is in the chair. He says good morning and announces that 1,028 deputies are present according to preliminary registration. Standing orders require registration again. As 947 deputies are present at the session, the Extraordinary Third Congress of People's Deputies can proceed.

At 0704 GMT Yeltsin declares the congress open and deputies stand for the Russian national anthem.

Yeltsin announces the obituary of an RSFSR deputy from Komi. Deputies stand to honour his memory. There are indistict calls from the hall. Yeltsin asks if there are procedural questions. Shouts are heard and Yeltsin asks them not to shout.

Deputy Filippov from Leningrad is then called to speak. He recalls Gorbachev's latest decrees, saying that the congress is taking place under siege conditions. He asks for Deputy Volkov to be allowed to read a statement.

At 0709 GMT, Volkov is called. He has difficulty starting due to many shouts. Yeltsin rings the order bell, then asks Volkov to wait for the hall to settle down. Volkov attempts to start again. There is more shouting and attempts to drown him with applause. Volkov reads on. He says Gorbachev's attempts to disrupt the congress by unconstitutional means with his antidemonstration decree in effect declares a state of emergency. The letter from 29 deputies to which the measure is a response is not sufficient grounds. Deputies must defend their congress. The appeal that Volkov is reading requests that the ban on demonstrations be rescinded, calls for a congress resolution on this, and asks for the RSFSR Council of Ministers to be charged with maintaining order in Moscow. The appeal is signed by 220 deputies. Applause follows.

Yeltsin then says Volkov's motion must be voted on. An unidentified deputy complains about voting procedures and says that working organs have not yet been elected. Such a group is necessary to check the accuracy of the vote count. Yeltsin agrees to the deputy's point, and proposes the formation of a voting supervision group. Yeltsin asks for nominations. A deputy on the rostrum makes a nomination, and also voices doubts about the reliability of the voting machinery. Yeltsin puts the prearranged list plus recent nomination to the vote. The decision adopted 801 to 119, with 26 abstentions.

At 0720 GMT, Deputy Kyshtimov is called to speak about fears on the reliability of the electronic voting system. He goes into its history and says that no system ever works 100 percent accurately all the time. He recalls that previously the system dealt with 360 votes recording names as well as for and against. An expert can tell them all the technical details if they need. He proposes a commission be formed to suggest enhancements. Meanwhile, all votes should be by name, so people can check that they are being recorded properly. This will take a lot of time, but there is no alternative. Deputies turn down the opportunity to hear technical details. Yeltsin puts to the vote the motion that all votes be by name, with results to be printed. The motion is adopted by 749 to 164.

At 0727 GMT Yeltsin moves on to the appointment of the congress secretariat. Deputy Nesterov recalls a promise to vote on Volkov's statement on the blockade of Moscow before electing working organs. There is applause. Yeltsin says a secretariat needs to be elected even to put the issue to the vote. An unidentified female deputy says they had to pass a lot of military vehicles to get to the hall. How can they have a congress under such conditions. There are demands that the blockade be lifted. There is applause.

Yeltsin says that in view of the evident strength of feelings, the motion can be put to the vote. Deputy (?Shabat) from Moscow says the congress is being held prisoner by forces no longer under local control but under Union control, since the formation of new militia administration for Moscow. There is applause.

An unidentified deputy says the congress needs proper conditions for its work. Deputy Varov from Leningrad recalls the group of 29's request for protection, and says no one can guarantee he will not be arrested in an hour's time. The Congress cannot accept the pressure it is under. Deputy (?Sheboldayev) says a vote should be held so congress can proceed, then makes an announcement on behalf of the Etika (Ethics) deputies' group, looking for new recruits.

At 0738 GMT Deputy Gurevich from Murmansk recalls deputies' obligations to uphold the law. (?Studenova) says the resolution should give a deadline for the removal of the blockade. Deputy Katenkov from the Jewish autonomous oblast says congress cannot proceed under the bayonets of the troops outside. Deputy Morozov, Vladimir Oblast, complains about a pamphlet issued by Deputy Chaykovskiy of the Communists of Russia that defames several deputies. From the rostrum, Deputy Shakhray talks about the masses of security force vehicles on the streets. Congress decisions adopted under gun barrels will have no force. There are calls for Ruslan Khasbulatov to be sent for talks with USSR Vice President Gennadiy Yanayev about the situation. Deputy Rebrikov, a militiaman, speaking at the rostrum, recalls previous major demonstrations that have passed without trouble. He asks why there is such fuss about today's planned demonstration? He says the men with guns should guard meetings of the communists and leave our congress alone.

Yeltsin then says it is time for a vote. No more will be accepted. He asks deputies to take their seats. He puts to the vote the motion to stop debate on the motion and move on to the vote on the resolution itself. The stop debate motion is adopted by 810 to 102.

At 0749 GMT, Yeltsin says the draft resolution will now be put to the vote. He reads the resolution. The result is 532 for, 286 against, with 93 abstentions. There is applause.

At 0752 GMT Yeltsin says Khasbulatov should be given time to arrange a mission to discuss militia encirclement as previously proposed. Yeltsin suggests he should report to the congress by 1100 GMT.

A deputy from Voronezh then proposes an addition to the resolution, but Yeltsin says it would take too much time. Deputy Baburin complains about procedural aberrations. Yeltsin asks Khasbulatov to begin his mission, then moves on to proposals for the congress secretariat. Deputy Kovalev objects to one of the nominations. There are then further nominations for the secretariat and comments on candidates made from the floor. Yeltsin calls for a vote on whether enough supplementary names should be voted on as an additional list or one by one. It is decided to take the names en bloc.

Yeltsin returns to the case of the deputy whose removal from the proposed secretariat composition was proposed. He puts the proposal to withdraw (Maya Ivanovna Eterentina) from the secretariat list to the vote. The proposal is rejected: (Eterentina) remains in the secretariat. The vote is 277 in favor, 668 against, with 58 abstentions.

Yeltsin reads the additional names proposed for the secretariat: Ponomarev, Kitov, Kobzev, Zaytseva, Kurochkin, Laitko, Chistykh, and Gubyakin. Yeltsin puts the whole amended list to the vote. The list is adopted 852 to 61, with 22 abstaining. Yeltsin asks the secretariat members to take seats on the platform. The secretariat is to be chaired by Ivan Basin, Yeltsin says, but then corrects himself and says the chairman must be elected by a vote. Then he reads the relevant standing order calling for a congress resolution appointing the secretariat leader, although previous congresses have not followed this precisely. The appointment of the secretariat and chairman is considered sufficient without a further vote.

At 0823 GMT Yeltsin proposes that the session move on to the congress agenda. The presidium's proposed agenda has been published. Further proposals are requested. Deputy Medvedev, as chairman of commission on national-state structure, says they cannot discuss the Union or federation treaty while there is a Union law on division of powers, which is in conflict with the Constitution. He asks that the USSR commission on supervision of the Constitution look into the matter. He proposes that Yeltsin make a combined report on the Union and federation treaties.

Deputy Rumyantsev from Moscow, speaking on the rostrum, recalls the RSFSR referendum vote in favor of having a president. He proposes the post be instituted by this congress. This would be the logical follow-up to the declaration of Russia's sovereignty. There is applause. A draft law was prepared, but was blocked in the constitutional commission.

At 0830 GMT Deputy Kiselev from Novokuznetsk reminds deputies that the miners' strike is continuing. Deputies are obliged to examine the matter. The agenda should include debate on the miners' political demands. Deputy (?Tsynko) says broadcasting the congress proceedings must be discussed. Deputy Gorkusha calls for agriculture to be included in agenda. Deputy Tarqasov asks permisison that an appeal from Rostov miners be read. Deputy Kotenkov agrees with Medvedev that a discussion of Union and federation treaties be combined as one agenda point. A deputy from Ulyanovsk says the results of the RSFSR referendum cannot be ignored, the issue of the presidency must be put on the agenda.

An unidentified deputy at the rostrum says the congress has to "dot some i's". Are we really for or against Russia? The question of power, in all its forms, must be settled. The institution of a presidency should be first on the agenda. The congress should nominate candidates for the post. It should also discuss a vice president and adopt a decree on power. The state flag and a new name for the state are other topics to discuss.

Deputy Filippov from Leningrad then says the tragic state of the country must be recognized. We face starvation. Decisions are not implemented, because executive authority is ineffective. A presidency must be instituted and the president must improve the power structure. Deputy Blokhin proposes that a law on a recall of deputies be on the agenda and supports the inclusion of the presidency issue on the agenda. Deputy Ryzhov, from Nizhniy Novgorod, supports the inclusion of the presidency debate, and also mentions a draft on appointment of an RSFSR "constitutional judge." Deputy Peruanskiy from Kazan recalls a wave of political debate and criticism of Yeltsin, and proposes that deputies remember objective laws of the development of society. To avoid party egotism, he proposes that the number of deputies required for convening an extraordinary congress be increased. A deputy form Ryazan Oblast makes a vague propsoal for the agenda to include further reports. Deputy Tikhonov from Vladimir oblast says congress runs the risk of a split, thus worsening the condition of the state. He supports the inclusion of a presidency debate. He asks for a Kuzbass miner to be allowed to read an appeal to the congress.

Deputy Deryagin from Kaluga, speaking from the rostrum, recalls that congress has been convened at the request of deputies from communists of Russia. In order for Russia to prosper, executive power must be reinforced. He supports a proposal for the institution of the presidency be on the agenda. It is the will of the people. He holds up a petition from his workplace asking for this to be on the agenda.

Deputy Surkov, speaking from the rostrum, recalls the adoption of a declaration of sovereignty and enthusiasm at the time. However, it seems that some do not really support the notion. This congress was not needed. It has been called by those who do not wish to heed the will of the people. He describes a public meeting in his local Tushino area calling for support for Yeltsin's policies and for the fact that other republics than Russia that had variants on the referendum question must be recognized. The resignation of USSR government was called for, with a coalition being formed. There was a call for the resignation of Yeltsin's deputies who criticized him. There is applause. Yeltsin objects to the insinuation of matters not relevant to the debate on the agenda. Surkov ignores him. Yeltsin asks him to stop and switches off the microphone.

Deputy Yeremin, from the rostrum, makes a proposal on a discussion of the RSFSR's socioeconomic position, saying a lot of work on the structure of presidential power is needed. The congress should order it and should discuss the actual institution of the presidency at the next congress.

At 0903 GMT Yeltsin announces a 30-minute break in the proceedings, a caption appears reading: "Russian and all-Union Television and radio companies." An announcer promises further reports at 1115, 1515, and 1845 GMT.

Rejects Ban on Demonstrations

LD2803082691

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian at 0655 GMT on 28 March carries the live opening session of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Third Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies from the Kremlin in Moscow.

At the opening of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies, following the registration of those present and the playing of the Russian anthem, the first speaker from the floor is Deputy (Filippov) from Leningrad, who opens his remarks with the following: "The whole world and the whole country know that the president's latest decrees have crudely violated the sovereignty of Russia. The center of Moscow—the ancient capital of Russia—has, without the knowledge or consent of the government of Russia or its parliament, effectively been placed in a state of siege. The elected representatives of the people of Russia have been forced to assemble in the Kremlin surrounded by soldiers and military hardware. I regard such a state of affairs as totally unacceptable, and that is the view of many."

Deputy (Filippov) then asks the deputies to listen to a statement signed by 220 deputies that Deputy Volkov will read. He mounts the podium and begins to speak against a background of commotion in the hall. Video show groups of deputies clapping in unison, with some apparently stamping their feet.

Volkov recalls the recent USSR Cabinet of Ministers ban on demonstrations in Moscow at the president's behest. He says this "effectively puts Moscow under a state of emergency" until 15 April. He adds: "We regard this step by the president and the USSR Government as a means of putting pressure on the congress, which could lead, in practice, to the wrecking of its work."

Volkov then proposes a solution to be adopted by the congress, as follows: "The congress considers that the decision by the USSR Cabinet of Ministers on 25 March 1991, banning holding demonstrations, picketing, or marches by working people in the city of Moscow, the capital of the RSFSR, from 26 March to 15 April, and the USSR president's decree of 26 March 1991 taking the militia bodies in the city of Moscow out of the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, as violations of Article 50 of the USSR Constitution and of Articles 48 and 76 of the RSFSR Constitution, and of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Russia. The RSFSR Congress People's Deputies resolves to suspend the effectiveness of the resolution of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' decision of 25 April 1991, temporarily suspending holding rallies, street marches, and demonstrations in Moscow; to suspend the effectiveness of the USSR president's decree of 26 March; and to instruct the RSFSR Council of Ministers to maintain public order in the capital, Moscow, and the oblast." He adds: "The draft resolution is submitted in the name of 220 deputies representing various parliamentary groups."

Debate follows on this resolution.

At 0752 GMT the RSFSR Congress People's Deputies votes on the resolution proposed by Deputy Volkov rejecting the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' ban on demonstrations in Moscow and the USSR President's associated decree taking Moscow militia bodies out of the jurisdiction of the RSFSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. The resolution passes by 532 to 286, with 93 abstentions.

Before the vote, Yeltsin reads the text of the resolution again. This is as given in the initial reading, with the omission of the reference in line 39 to Article 76 of the RSFSR Constitution and the omission in line 47 of the words "in the capital, Moscow, and the oblast."

After the vote, Yeltsin proposes that Rusban Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, should now hold discussions to make the appropriate arrangements in the light of the vote and "by the time of our break at 1400 [1100 GMT] to determine what further actions we should take."

Examination of Miners' Strike Urged

LD2803104991 Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian 0655 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Comments by Deputy Kiselev during the opening session of the extraordinary third Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) at the Kremlin in Moscow on 28 March—live]

[Text] I am Deputy Kiselev from the 439th constituency of Novokuznetsk.

Respected congress and respected presidium: Today everyone knows that the miners of the country are on strike, not only in our republic, but in other regions of our country as well. The problem has become so much more acute that today we cannot close our eyes to this strike. I consider that we, as people's deputies, are quite simply obliged to examine this problem and include the political demands of the miners of the coal mining regions in the republic on our agenda.

The political demands that have appeared today [changes thought].... This is the situation that forced the miners to strike. There is a crisis in the country, a crisis in the republic, which has arisen because of those structures that we see in our country today. Therefore, it is essential to include this most important issue on today's agenda.

In addition to this, we propose the following system for drawing up the agenda, in the name of the working union of Russia group of deputies. All the issues and proposals should be examined. The order in which they are to be examined should then be defined. The first issue should be the issue of the political strike by the miners in our republic.

Thank you for listening.

Afternoon Session Reported

LD2803122591

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian at 1115 GMT on 28 March carries a live report on the afternoon session of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Third Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies at the Kremlin in Moscow.

Correspondent Yelena Ozrina covers the RSFSR extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. She summarizes the planned work of the afternoon session, including the suspension of the presidential decree. Ruslan Khasbulatov spoke to Gorbachev, who did not accept the decision of the congress. The RSFSR congress decides to suspend the session's work until 0700 GMT on 29 March.

Ozrina then conducts a two-minute interview with Deputy Tuliyev from the Kuzbass on his views regarding a solution to the miners' crisis. Tuliyev says that all parties in Russia must sign a civil accord agreement.

At 1121 GMT, commentator Vadim Simoneneko interviews A.V. Rushkoy, a member of the supreme soviet presidium, on the work of the congress. Rushkoy says that the adoption of the decisions by the congress was necessary. He is asked when the congress will end, since the date of 2 April has been stated. Rushkoy says it will last until the necessary decisions are adopted.

At 1125 GMT the report on the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies end.

Gorbachev Decision on Troops Reported

LD2803141591 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1212 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] After the interval, Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov returned to the [Russian Congress of People's Deputies] session. This is what he had to say:

[Begin Khasbulatov recording] On the instructions of the congress I had a fairly lengthy discussion with the country's president, the esteemed Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. I brought to his notice all the points contained in the decision we have adopted. It seems to me that I tried to use the whole of my, perhaps not very great, experience in order to persuade the president to accept at least part of our demands, or rather requests, linked with ensuring the work of the congress in a normal situation so that there would not be any formal grounds to say that certain external forces were putting pressure on the will and the behavior of the people's deputies of the Russian Federation.

With regard to taking the Armed Forces off the streets and squares of the city of Moscow today, the president displayed his inflexibility and lack of compromise on this issue. At the same time, I have to inform you that the president promised that he will remove these troops tomorrow, but today they have been brought in so as to prevent possible disorder. On behalf of the congress, I assured him that we have given instructions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. We have secured the complete approval and assurances of the Moscow City Soviet that complete order will be ensured, without the armed forces that have been brought into the city of Moscow. I asked him to give an opportunity to appoint, perhaps, the vice president or some other top officials in order to give us an opportunity to discuss this situation in order to satisfy at least partially our decisions, if only as regards individual points, so that at least some kind of compromise can be achieved. But the president asked me to convey verbatim his words that he respects the congress of the Russian deputies but that there are also organs above congresses. He will not change his decision today.

I have tried to convey to you everything, almost verbatim, if only very briefly. [end recording]

Congress Adjourns

LD2803135191 Moscow TASS in English 1334 GMT 28 Mar 91

[By TASS legislative correspondent Boris Zverev]

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—Already the first decision, which the Russian parliament took at its third extraordinary congress today, forced it to adjourn until tomorrow.

After voting for suspending the Soviet Government's resolution that effectively banned demonstrations and rallies in Moscow between March 26-April 15 and the

Soviet president's decree on removing Moscow militia from the control of city authorities, the deputies stressed the need to enforce the suspension.

Deputies expressed dissatisfaction with what they called the blockade of the centre by Interior troops and police, which were instructed to prevent the meeting planned by the movement Democratic Russia for today.

Ruslan Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, who conveyed to President Mikhail Gorbachev the congress decision, quoted the president as saying that police and Interior troops would be withdrawn from central Moscow on Friday.

According to Khasbulatov, the president "would not compromise with regard to the withdrawal of Interior troops and police from the centre today," in order to prevent disturbances.

Gorbachev told Khasbulatov that he respected the decisions of the congress but saw it necessary to fulfill the law. He refused to change his decision.

The Soviet Constitution proclaims supremacy of Union laws over republican ones. Therefore, the Congress of Russian People's Deputies cannot overrule decisions of central authorities.

However, in response to the president, the delegates decided to adjourn until tomorrow and hold consultations with parliamentary groups and representatives of various parties in the afternoon to discuss questions of the agenda.

At the same time, it was decided that chairman of the Russian parliament Boris Yeltsin will demand from Moscow authorities to take measures to prevent disturbances during a rally in Moscow and the republican Interior Ministry to ensure public order with the help of Russian law enforcement agencies.

TASS Cites Press Reportage

LD2803073591 Moscow TASS in English 0726 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—The third emergency Russian Federation Congress of People's Deputies opens in the Kremlin today.

It will pass several major laws and discuss draft Union and federation treaties.

In the run up to the congress several newspapers carry interviews with Russian lawmakers today.

PRAVDA carries an interview with Deputy Gennadiy Petukhov, who believes the congress will mirror tensions in the republic and the country.

A large group of deputies demanded the convening of the congress because the country is on the brink of economic collapse, Petukhov said.

The congress might consider the resignation of the Russian Government and parliament Chairman Boris Yeltsin, Deputy Petr Rakov said.

Boris Yeltsin does not perform the key function—to unite all parliamentary faction. "All deputies wish only good for the people, but argue with each other vehemently we should cast aside all ambitions—both the Democratic Russia Movement and Russian communists," Rakov said.

First Deputy Chairman of the Russian parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov said in PRAVDA: "We managed to prepare the congress. The key issue on its agenda is a report by the parliament's chairman on the political, social, and economic situation in Russia and ways out of the crisis."

"Parliamentary committees and commissions and all Russian structures did everything possible to ensure that it contains somber-minded, prudent decisions aimed towards a way out of this difficult situation," he said.

"We will have to seek agreement because, as the president says, we are all in one boat," he said.

The Russia group expects fruitful work, rather than political hype from the congress, Vladimir Lisin, member of the Russian parliament committee on interrepublican relations and one of the members of the group, said in an interview with SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA.

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA carries an interview with General Anatoliy Koltunov, who has just returned from a tour of towns beyond the polar circle.

People are waiting effective decisions from the congress, he said.

Russian-Soviet Confrontation Over Ban Continues

Security Along 'Old Procedures'

PM2803100391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 27 Mar 91 Union Edition p 2

[Report by A. Illesh: "Moscow, 28 March...IZVESTIYA Correspondents on the Situation in the Capital Following the USSR Cabinet of Ministers Resolution"]

[Text] A call to the Moscow Military District command. The duty officer speaks.

"There are no instructions on this as yet. But if they come through we will carry them out. The situation is contradictory, though. It changes several times a day."

Colonel B. Makarov, Moscow deputy military commandant:

"We are following the old procedures. The Cabinet of Ministers resolution states: The problem of rallies and demonstrations must be handled by the Internal Affairs Ministry and KGB."

There is no point calling the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee Main Internal Affairs Administration, since this militia structure vanished with the president's Decree. The new one is the USSR Internal Affairs Ministry Main Administration for Moscow and Moscow Oblast and its leadership refused to answer the editorial office's question.

Our correspondent N. Burbyga was told at the USSR KGB Administration for Moscow City and Oblast press service that KGB organs are obliged to implement the USSR Cabinet of Ministers resolution. But common sense suggests, the chekists explained, that it will be difficult to do this. Our actions will depend on the specific operational situation in the capital; it will tell us how to act. We will be paying particular attention to the railroad.

"Why particular attention?"

"There are several reasons for this. One of them is sabotage. For example, at 0600 on 4 February a hawser was stretched across a railroad track near Moscow and some crossties were ripped up. The criminals did not run away. Their purpose was to attract attention. An investigation is under way. Another example was the events on the subway, when an attempt was made to plant an explosive device. Our task is to prevent all this sort of thing. To localize the extremists, so that the congress can take place normally, without any outrageous incidents. We are also hoping that it will be explained to people that these measures are necessary."

"But let's say rallies take place? What will you do?"

"As you pointed out, the resolution gives the KGB a secondary role. The Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee is at the forefront. But we are still hoping that people will be sensible."

In its resolution the USSR Cabinet of Ministers instructed the USSR Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Civil Aviation to intensify security on transport within the Moscow transport network. How do these departments view this instruction?

V. Ginko, USSR first deputy minister of railways, believes that orderly procedures and passenger safety must be ensured at railroad stations. Ticket sales will be speeded up and train operating procedures will be strictly observed. The question of station patrols is being worked out with internal affairs organs.

A. Goryashko, USSR first deputy minister of civil aviation, told our correspondent G. Alimov that during this period people must not be allowed to congregate at airports. Security operations will be intensified—baggage inspection and so on. Special attention will be paid to the observance of strict professional discipline.

The transport militia administration has received no additional instructions, so they can only step up their normal work.

Militia To Act Against Meetings

LD2703182291 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1600 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Interview with Colonel (Gennadiy Nikolayevich Feklichev), deputy head of the main administration for the maintenance of public order of the Main Directorate for Internal Affairs for Moscow and Moscow Oblast of the USSR Internal Affairs Ministry, by correspondent Anatoliy Fedorov; place, date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Fedorov] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, as is known, a number of political organizations and movements have planned a mass meeting in the capital tomorrow, on the opening of the extraordinary Congress of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic People's Deputies.

[(Felichev)] Yes, this is so. It is also known that the USSR Cabinet of Ministers has adopted a decision not to allow any processions or meetings on 28 March—I would like to stress that this is a working day—and has ordered the Main Administration for Internal Affairs to take all necessary measures to ensure the appropriate public order and calm in the capital as well as not to allow any pressure on people's deputies. The Cabinet of Ministers has also banned any meetings, pickets, street processions, and demonstrations in Moscow between 26 March and 15 April 1991. The Moscow militia will take all measures to carry out faithfully the decision of the Soviet Government and to ensure the appropriate public order and safety, taking cognizance of the situation which will arise. At the same time, I would like to appeal to the hearts of Moscovites, to the guests of the capital, and to their sense of civil duty, to show sensibility and responsiblity, and not to fall for the calls and base emotions of those who, for the sake of their own ambitions, are prepared to create additional tension in the city, to endanger peoples' lives, and to push them into the unpredictable abyss of chaos and lawlessness.

Militia Officer on Rally Policing

PM2703213891 Moscow TRUD in Russian 28 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by V. Ramenskiy: "Dangerous Confrontation"]

[Text] As already reported, the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, fulfilling the USSR Supreme Soviet resolution of 21 March 1991 and guided by the directives and powers given to it by the USSR president on 23 March, has adopted a resolution banning the holding of rallies, pickets, street marches, and demonstrations in Moscow from 26 March through 15 April 1991, and has issued corresponding instructions to a number of ministries and departments. In response, the coordinating council of the "Democratic Russia" movement has reaffirmed its intention to hold a demonstration and rally in the capital 28 March, permission for which was obtained beforehand from Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee [gorispolkom].

"A single spark is enough to kindle a flame," General Lev Belyanskiy, deputy chief of Moscow Gorispolkom Main Internal Affairs Administration, told us. Incidentally, not long before our conversation, the Main Internal Affairs Administration was redesignated as a main administration of the Union Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD] by presidential decree. So the general, like many of his colleagues, had difficulty in putting a precise name to his new post. The capital's militia has thus been removed, in legislative terms, from the Moscow City Soviet's jurisdiction. But even in their new capacity the staffers of Moscow's internal affairs organs are not too clear how they should act if the inhabitants take to the streets nevertheless.

For the moment, according to Gen. Belyanskiy, they are concentrating on explanatory work with the Muscovites. They are asking them to be prudent, not to congregate in the city center, and not to let their children go there. As the general said, the crime situation in Moscow is alarming, criminals have a great many firearms, and these could be fired at the most inappropriate moment.

In order to prevent this from happening and to maintain public order, Moscow militia personnel, joint patrols with the Army, internal troops servicemen, and students at USSR MVD educational establishments will be used. They expect to operate according to "conventional patterns" [po "obychnym skhemam"]. There are no plans, Belyanskiy said, to use armored carriers...

Yanayev Warns Rally Organizers

LD2703165991 Moscow TASS in English 1618 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 27 TASS—Soviet Vice President Gennady Yanayev today met Moscow City Executive Council Chairman Yuri Luzhkov, and USSR People's Deputies Yuriy Afanasyev and Arkady Murashov, who urged Muscovites to take part in the March 28 Moscow rally in an appeal on behalf of the "Democratic Russia" coordination council.

Yanayev drew their" attention to the March 25 resolution of the USSR Government which banned rallies, march-pasts and demonstrations in Moscow between March 26 and April 15. They stressed the need to strictly abide by the resolution aimed at ensuring public security in the capital during important public and political events.

Afanasyev and Murashov were warned at the meeting, which was also attended by Soviet Interior Minister Boris Pugo and State Security Committee Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, about their responsibility for a call to organise a rally, banned by the Soviet Government, for the possible violations of public order as a result of such unlawful calls and actions, for the attempt to exert impermissible pressure on people's deputies.

Yanayev has called on them to display common sense, consideration and awareness of the acuteness of the current situation in order to create all the necessary conditions to ensure law and order in the capital.

Russian Legislature: Ban 'Illegal'

LD2703173691 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1600 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The text of a statement by the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet Presidium has been received through the channels of TASS.

The RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, guided by Article 138 of the USSR Constitution and Article 114 of the RSFSR Constitution, considers it necessary to state: The decision of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers on the temporary suspension on holding of rallies, street marches, and demonstrations in Moscow, which virtually prohibits the holding on 28 March of a rally which had been permitted according to established procedures; and the USSR presidential decree of 26 March, which was introduced outside the jurisdiction of the Moscow City Executive Committee, the Moscow Oblast Executive Committee, and also the RSFSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and the main directorate of the internal affairs of Moscow and Moscow Oblast, are illegal and crudely infringe upon Articles 48 of the USSR Constitution, Articles 48 and 72 of the RSFSR Constitution, and the declaration on RSFSR state sovereignty.

The RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium states that the adoption of unconstitutional acts, especially amid an unstable political situation, could have the most serious and unforeseen consequences, and responsibility for them fully rests with the president of hte USSR and the USSR Cabinet of Ministers.

The RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium turns to the USSR Supreme Soviet with an urgent demand to give an immediate appraisal of the activities of the executive bodies of the USSR and to adopt all necessary measures to ensure the constitutional rights and liberties of citizens, and to render assistance in ensuring the possibility of holding the congress of RSFSR People's Deputies in a normal working atmosphere.

At the same time, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium calls upon all citizens, workers' collectives, and public forces to maintain calm, to refrain from infringements of the established order, and to exert maximum efforts toward unification and consolidation.

Moscow Soviet Discusses Ban

LD2703214591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1537 GMT 27 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Igor Agabekov]

[Excerpts] Moscow, 27 Mar (TASS)—Deputies of the Moscow City Soviet have adopted a decision holding the Union leadership totally responsible for the possible consequences of the use of forces against participants in the rally planned for 28 March.

At the same time, Yevgeniy Karabanov, deputy head of State Security Committee for Moscow [City] and Moscow Oblast, who spoke at the meeting warned those with particularly "hot heads", that the "law enforcement bodies have accepted the USSR Cabinet of Ministers decision on fulfillment and will fulfill it unswervingly." He advised the Moscow Soviet deputies "to display common sense, calmness, and restraint and to call on Muscovites not to go out on to the streets on 28 March so as to prevent any consequences." [passage omitted]

The participants in the Moscow soviet session adopted a statement which assessed the presidential decree and the Cabinet of Ministers's decision as "a direct challenge to the Moscow Soviet aimed at intensifying the atmosphere of confrontation in Moscow on the eve of the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic."

The debate about the legal rights and lawfulness of holding tomorrow's rally was stormy. Some deputies called for the demonstration to be held in spite of the ban by the USSR Cabinet of Ministers. Others stated that armored vehicles which they had seen "with their own eyes" were already on the streets of Moscow and were ready to engage the Muscovites. Yet others called for common sense to be shown and for their electors not to be provoked and for the holding of the demonstration to be renounced.

Refuses To Comply With Ban

LD2703161491 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1530 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] The Moscow Soviet has refused to comply with the decision of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers on a temporary ban on holding rallies, street marches and demonstrations in Moscow. Nor does it intend to abide by the decree in which the USSR president is taking the capital's militia out of the control of the Moscow City Executive Committee.

This is the gist of a statement signed by the majority of participants of a meeting held today by Moscow Soviet deputies.

Moscow Soviet Statement on Ban

PM2803111791 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 28 Mar 91 p 1

["Own Information" report on "Statement by Moscow Soviet Deputies" followed by unattributed paragraph under the general heading: "Trouble in the Air"]

[Text]**Statement by Moscow Soviet Deputies**

"...On the false pretext of imaginary concern for the security of certain people's deputies from some extremist elements... two unprecedented documents have been published: the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' resolution of 25 March 1991 and the USSR President's decree of 26 March 1991. Does the extraordinary nature of these documents accord with the objective situation in Moscow? It is our conviction that it does not. At present the situation in Moscow cannot be regarded as extraordinary from the legal viewpoint and so does not require the appropriate extraordinary measures to be introduced...

"We... state the following:

"1. The Cabinet of Ministers' resolution and the President's decree cannot have the force of law or be accepted for execution...

"2. The above decisions... drastically heighten social tension in Moscow... The president and the prime minister bear full responsibility for the possible consequences."

(From a resolution adopted at a general meeting of Moscow Soviet deputies 27 March)

There were no particular disagreements as to whether a rally should be held. Moscow Soviet deputies decided to head the columns of demonstrators.

'Democratic Russia' Urges Nonviolence

LD2703214691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Remarks by USSR People's Deputy Arkadiy Nikolayevich Murashev, cochairman of the Democratic Russia Movement Coordinating Council; date not given; from the "Vremya" newscast—recorded]

[Text] During our meeting with USSR Vice President Yanayev, Interior Minister Pugo, and KGB Chairman Kryuchkov, we were warned of the need to observe the 25 March decision of the Cabinet of Ministers on a temporary suspension of rallies, processions, and demonstrations in Moscow, and about our responsibility for the possible consequences of attempts to hold demonstrations. We appraised the decision of the Cabinet of Minister as being in violation of Article 50 of the USSR Constitution, which guarantees for citizens the right to hold rallies, processions, and demonstrations, and confirmed our intention to hold a demonstration and rally at the place and time approved by the Moscow City Executive Committee.

Nevertheless, the organizers of the demonstration consider it necessary to address the following to Muscovites:

Dear fellow citizens, if tomorrow along the route of the procession of the columns from the points of assembly in Mayakovskiy Square and Novoarbatskiy Avenue to Manezhnaya Square you come across barriers or violent hindrances of the progress of the columns, we ask you to show self-control and restraint, not to yield to possible provocations and not to commit any violent acts.

'Democratic Russia' Cancels Picket

LD2703221891 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2030 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] My colleague Andrey Bishchayev has reported that about an hour and a half ago a meeting of the Democratic Russia Coordinating Council (?ended), which adopted a decision not to hold the tomorrow's planned picketing of the route of the peoples deputies of our republic to the Great Kremlin Palace to the opening of the extraordinary congress. No pickets will be set up, so as to avoid unpredictable conflicts with the enforcers of law and order.

Yeltsin: Ban 'Unconstitutional'

LD2803091991 Moscow TASS in English 0854 GMT 28 Mar 91

[By TASS legislative correspondent Lev Aksyonov]

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—Russian legislature President Boris Yeltsin described the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' decree banning rallies in Moscow from March 26 to April 15 an "unconstitutional action, an insult to the congress and people's deputies of the Russian Federation."

Yeltsin made this statement during a conversation with reporters in the Kremlin today before the opening of the third extraordinary congress of the Russian Federation's people's deputies.

Yeltsin said that there will not be "bloodshed" in connection with a demonstration in support of the Russian leadership, planned for this afternoon in Moscow. "I believe that the people who will gather will show wisdom, as will units of Interior Ministry forces," he said.

Asked about the possible timeframe for holding the general election of the Russian Federation's president, the Russian legislature president said it could be held in May, but the final decision will be made by the congress.

Regarding his relations with Mikhail Gorbachev, Yeltsin confirmed that "he does not plan any coup but speaks from positions of principle", which differ from those of the Soviet president.

Yeltsin said the "Communists of Russia" group may attempt to remove him from his post as head of the Russian legislature at the congress. "But I am sure I can oppose this initiative," Yeltsin said.

Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee. A session is taking place, which could go on until late.

Our commentary: During our efforts to obtain an explanation of the actions of the military and the militia on the day of the canceled (but hitherto authorized by the Moscow City Soviet) rally and demonstration in the capital, planned for 28 March, we encountered a justified reluctance on the part of the authorities to comment on proposed actions. Why justified? Well, no department knows exactly what it is going to do if the demonstration actually takes place, if thousands of Muscovites go onto the streets. Beat them? Shoot them? Act "by the book"?

But let us consider whether this resolution can actually be implemented in the present situation. Will the grim document "On the temporary suspension of rallies, street processions, and demonstrations in Moscow" not have the opposite effect? At any rate, many people have said to me: People certainly will be out on the streets on Thursday now!

I believe the brand-new presidential decree, dated today, on the creation of a new administration in the Union Internal Affairs Ministry structure—for Moscow and Moscow Oblast—is directly linked to this situation. The militia has finally been taken out (legislatively now) of the charge of the Moscow City Soviet. And the first test of this step will be on Thursday: How will the custodians of law and order conduct themselves in the capital?

...The editorial office has learned that the "Democratic Russia" movement coordinating council, having condemned the "...illegal and unconstitutional actions of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers," has confirmed its decision to hold a demonstration and rally on Manezhnaya Square from 1700 through 1930 on 28 March. An appeal to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Presidium has also been adopted in this connection.

So, will it be confrontation?

Congress Votes To Suspend Ban

LD2803113691 Moscow TASS in English 1122 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 28 TASS—Participants in the emergency Russian Federation Congress of People's Deputies, which opened in Moscow today, decided to adjourn the forum until Friday, following a dispute with President Mikhail Gorbachev over troop deployment in the Soviet capital.

The congress voted to suspend a 20-day Soviet Government ban on rallies and demonstrations in Moscow and Gorbachev's decree removing Moscow police from under the control of city authorities.

During the debate on the resolution, several deputies blasted the deployment of police units and vehicles in downtown Moscow to prevent a rally planned for today by the Democratic Russia Movement in spite of the government ban.

First Deputy Chairman of the Russian legislature Ruslan Khasbulatov, who met Gorbachev to discuss the issue, said he promised to remove Interior Troops and police from the city centre on Friday, when there will be no threat to public order.

Most delegates were unhappy about Gorbachev's decision and decided to suspend the congress until Friday morning.

Forces 'Beat Back' Demonstrators

AU2803082991 Paris AFP in English 0820 GMT 28 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, March 28 (AFP)—Security forces sealed off the Kremlin on Thursday and beat back 30 demonstrators trying to reach Red Square in support of Russian Republic radical leader Boris Yeltsin.

A special session of the Russian republic's parliament called by Mr. Yeltsin's opponents, who are trying to oust him, meanwhile opened in the Kremlin Thursday.

The demonstrators emerged from a tunnel that links the Russia Hotel, where the republic's parliamentarians stay, with Red Square, but were quickly repelled by special units of the Soviet militia.

Soviet authorities have banned street demonstrations called in support of Mr. Yeltsin by the progressive coalition movement Democratic Russia.

Dozens of military trucks have been parked around the city centre to prevent any demonstrators reaching Red Square or Manezh Square, under the Kremlin walls. Democratic Russia has refused to call off its demonstration, scheduled for late afternoon Thursday.

Gorbachev: Troops To Be Withdrawn

LD2803105591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1021 GMT 28 Mar 91

[By TASS legislative correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 28 Mar (TASS)—USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev has reported that the militia details and internal troop units will be withdrawn from the center of Moscow tomorrow. This was reported to Russian people's deputies by Ruslan Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the republican legislature, who presented the congress' decision to the head of state.

As has already been reported, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Congress of People's Deputies today adopted a decision on the suspension of the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers banning the holding of demonstrations and rallies in Moscow, and also suspending the USSR presidential decree on removing the Moscow militia from the subordination of the city authorities.

According to Ruslan Khasbulatov, the head of state said that he respects the decisions of the congress but considers it necessary to discharge the law.

The existing USSR Constitution proclaims the superiority of Union acts of legislation over republican acts. From this point of view, the republican congress cannot rescind the decisions of Union bodies.

At the moment, the congress is debating whether to continue or suspend its work.

Legality of Ban Queried

PM2703174091 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Union Edition p 8

[Report by A. Illesh and V. Reshetnikov on interviews with V. Maksimov, chairman of Moscow City Soviet Subcommission for Law and Order; Boris Lazarev, deputy chairman of the Constitutional Oversight Committee; and I. Tsyganenko, deputy chief of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers Legal Department; place, date of interviews not given: "Spring Confrontation in Moscow"]

[Text] Moscow City Soviet Chairman Gavriil Popov has condemned the USSR Cabinet of Ministers resolution banning the holding of rallies, pickets, street marches, and demonstrations in the capital from 26 March through 15 April 1991. "Despite the difficult life that Moscow lives," Popov said, "there is no situation in the capital that could even remotely be interpreted as requiring emergency measures... There has recently been a great deal of talk, accusing the democrats of having chosen confrontation, but in practice what it amounts to is that those who made these accusations are themselves pursuing such a course."

"The resolution has led to an even greater upsurge in tension," in the view of V. Maksimov, chairman of Moscow City Soviet Subcommission for Law and Order.

"Unfortunately," the deputy says, "the highest authorities are constantly engaging in unlawful actions: Remember the notorious, later repealed, presidential Decree 'On Regulating the Holding of Mass Events on Moscow's Territory Inside Sadovoye Koltso.' In the present instance the Cabinet of Ministers is suspending for just 20 days the USSR Constitution, and with it our international accords and commitments, which we took upon ourselves in Vienna, voted for at the United Nations, and so forth. But obviously it is worth reminding people that international standards in the sphere of human rights do not provide for creating a mechanism to ban rallies and demonstrations for ideological or political motives. But Prime Minister V. Pavlov has banned them.

"The authorities, displaying disrespect for the USSR Constitution and laws, are provoking a chain reaction of lawlessness, or, as the leaders themselves are fond of saying, a 'war of laws.'

"As a militia worker I can state quite unequivocally: The use of the militia as a buffer between the people and a power that does not enjoy prestige carries a very narrow safety margin."

We asked Boris Lazarev, deputy chairman of the Constitutional Oversight Committee, to comment on that view.

"I think the resolution's publication could prompt an undesirable reaction in society," Boris Mikhaylovich says. "As for the resolution itself, only the Cabinet of Ministers Legal Department can give a full explanation. Because in its resolution the Cabinet cites the instructions of the USSR Supreme Soviet and powers vested in it by the USSR president. The president, as you know, has been granted the right to issue legislative acts—including acts on questions of maintaining public order. The Supreme Soviet has vested in the president temporary legislative powers in the event of emergency conditions in the country. And he, for his part, may have issued a normative decree. I do not know whether such a document exists or not. You would have to ask the legal department: Do you have a decree, or not? And what does this decree authorize the Cabinet to do? If the appropriate norm—on banning rallies and demonstrations—is not there, then naturally the question of the legality of the Cabinet of Ministers resolution itself will arise. If the decree exists, then... Until 31 March 1992 the president has the right to issue legislative acts.

"That is the first point. Now the second. The deputy [Maksimov] considers the right to marches and rallies to be an unconditional human right. But that is not so! The law on a state of emergency specifically mentions the possibility of a total ban on holding any mass events—admittedly on condition that a state of emergency has been declared. That is, in cases covered by legislation, a ban on the holding of events of any kind for a specified time is possible. In bourgeois countries too, if necessary, a state of emergency is declared and marches and demonstrations are banned, and that happens not infrequently."

[IZVESTIYA] But things have yet to get as far as a state of emergency, as far as our editorial office knows...

[Lazarev] That is not what I meant. I mean that international pacts should not be regarded as unconditional. A country's internal legislation can provide for the possibility of suspending provisions from those pacts.

[IZVESTIYA] But a situation has arisen before when the president banned rallies...

[Lazarev] Yes, a year ago the president issued a decree on the procedure for holding marches and demonstrations within Moscow's Sadovoye Koltso. The Constitutional Oversight Committee found that the president had exceeded his powers. At that time it was stipulated in law that the regulation of marches and demonstrations was within the competence of Moscow City Soviet or the republic legislative bodies. But now the situation has changed... [Lazarev ends]

We contacted the USSR Cabinet of Ministers Legal Department and asked: Has there been a normative presidential decree authorizing the Cabinet to ban rallies and demonstrations? I. Tsyganenko, deputy chief of the department:

"I have not seen such a document. But in the course of a day," he added, "a great torrent of business documentation pours in, so it is possible that a decree has come in."

In Igor Tsyganenko's view, it would be necessary to make inquiries from the president's apparatus—to whom did they issue this document?

...While the competent bodies are finding out whether or not absolutely all the documents making this resolution lawful exist, the resolution itself has already given the militia and internal troops an unequivocal order to act. People could come into direct confrontation with the authorities in the street. And it is hardly likely that on 28 March anyone in the crowd will be going into the legal niceties or the nuances of international law and our own law. Neither side will be going into these things.

The editorial office has just learned that in the morning of 27 March Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee and certain deputies met with the leadership of the city militia and KGB. The focus of the discussion was, in all the circumstances—and in Resolutions 59 and 60 Moscow City Soviet once again approved the holding of the demonstration—to try to ensure citizens' safety and avoid conflicts. But it will be extremely difficult to do this: According to our information, a double barrier made up of trucks will form a circle barring people's access to the city center. But nonetheless the subway is apparently not going to stop work. Once again, it remains only to trust to the prudence of all the participants in the spring confrontation.

Motives for Rally Questioned

PM2803110991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 28 Mar 91 Second Edition pp 1,2

[Article by Georgiy Ovcharenko under the rubric: "My Opinion": "Do Bridges Have To Be Burned? People, Think About Why You Are Now Being Invited to Rallies and Demonstrations"]

[Excerpt] Think about it, people: Who is inviting you to take part in rallies and demonstrations today, and why? And for what? To do more, better work—which is the only way to abundance, to ensure that we really embark on the road to a rule-of-law state and true democracy? Absolutely not! You are being invited along to ensure that "Democratic Russia" people stay in power with our help.

Only a naive person can fail to realize why the rally is scheduled to coincide with the opening of the extraordinary Congress of RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] People's Deputies. The Russian legislature is in crisis today. It is not a matter of whether Yeltsin should or should not be the head of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. It is a matter of choosing a political course. A number of the deputies who are inviting us to the rally today see this course lying in confrontation with the center, isolating the republics, moving society toward capitalism [kapitalizatsiya], and abandoning everything—the good things as well as the bad—that we have achieved en route to socialism.

The most annoying thing is that concepts are being substituted and black is being blatantly passed off as white. As I write these lines a TASS report of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium statement has been put on my desk. It ends with an appeal for citizens, labor collectives, and social forces to keep calm, refrain from violating established order, and make efforts to unite and consolidate. You could only rejoice at this: Common sense has finally prevailed! But this joy disappears when you grasp the crux of the document. The RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium rejects the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' resolution on the provisional suspension in Moscow of rallies, street marches, and demonstrations. In other words, confrontation once again. It looks as though we are being urged to be calm and preserve the established order, yet everything is being done to exacerbate confrontation over and over and create tension.

Now a word about the ban imposed by the USSR Cabinet of Ministers on rallies and demonstrations in Moscow through 15 April. Whatever my attitude to it in effect, as a citizen fighting for a rule-of-law state I am bound to obey the resolution adopted by the country's Cabinet of Ministers. Just as all other citizens and political and public organizations are bound. One law for everyone.

It is particularly deplorable that some deputies, who should by virtue of their status propagandize the rule of law, are setting us on the path of legal nihilism. I am not saying this for effect. Following the decision adopted by the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, a number of RSFSR deputies stated at the Moscow Soviet their intention to hold meetings with voters on Moscow's main squares. What is this if not a challenge to the law? A challenge that smacks of farce, moreover. I cannot, for instance, understand what questions I, as a voter, can settle with my deputy on Manege Square. Or how deputy is to receive voters at the Mayakovskiy monument: all at once, or do they have to register in a line, noting their number on their hand?

At any rate, I think that my deputy is inviting me along to the capital's squares not in order to resolve my pressing problems, of which I have, so to speak, more than enough, but in order to fortify his own political ambitions. Something else is giving me personally a headache: How are my family and I to survive amid the chaos engendered by people who rely not on the law, but on mob rule...?

It would be laughable were it not sad. We are all fighting for order. At the same time, inspired by some deputies, we are all creating disorder. This farce could end in tragedy....

So, what will happen today? Will we take a step toward a rule-of-law state or will we bury our hope of it once and for all? Everyone must answer this question for themselves and make his own choice.

Strike Breaks Out at Major Sverdlovsk Factory

AU2703182291 Paris AFP in English 1746 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, March 27 (AFP) — A strike broke out on Wednesday [27 March] in Sverdlovsk in the Urals at one of the Soviet Union's major factories, Uralmach, the INTERFAX news agency reported on Wednesday.

The strikers are protesting against poor supplies for the city, especially of bread, the agency said. The engineering plant plays a role in the Soviet military-industrial complex thanks to some of its products.

TASS news agency said the strike lasted for two hours, but INTERFAX reported that some of the factory sections had stopped work for longer periods.

INTERFAX said there was a rally in front of the factory to express solidarity with striking Soviet miners.

Sverdlovsk is the home base of Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, who began his political career there.

Caucasus

Yeltsin Seeks To Halt Spread of Georgian Crisis

LD2703194191

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian at 1540 GMT on 26 March in the "Parliamentary Herald of Russia" program carries a 10-minute video report on Boris Yeltsin, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic President's visit to Georgia, including South Ossetia.

Yeltsin appears at a rally, captioned Vladikavkaz, Severo-Osetinskaya Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR]. A slogan held in the crowd says "Boris Nikolayevich! Help South Ossetia!" Yeltsin is addressing the rally. Another slogan says; "Yeltsin sticks in the throat of the partocracy [party bureaucracy]." The video shows black cars driving along a road, overtaking an armored personnel carrier. The caption reads: The town of Kazbegi, Republic of Georgia. Yeltsin and Zviyad Gamsakhurdia, Georgian SSR Supreme Soviet chairman, are shown seated in an office.

Gamsakhurdia says: "It is essential to put a stop to this bloodshed. It is essential to restore peace and stability. To begin with we have decided to set up a joint commission of the ministries of internal affairs of Georgia and Russia and subsequently to set up a joint detachment to disarm all the illegal militarized formations in order to achieve peace and calm and to restore legitimate authority, supplies, and everything that will lead to peace and stability."

Yeltsin says: "This means that this combined detachment, a joint detachment of the Russian Federation and the Georgian republic ministries of internal affairs will be tasked first with disarming everyone, irrespective of their nationality, and second with ensuring public order until peace and calm is fully restored. In addition, the councils of ministers are instructed to ensure that refugees return to these regions and that appropriate material assistance is made available to build and restore housing and social amenities—namely, to all the conditions for a normal existence. Well, a protocol of this kind will contain in the first place our wish, the wish of both parties to the agreement, the high contracting parties to conclude a treaty, both a general and an economic treaty as well as the resolution of this problem. This protocol will be signed today and will subsequently be given to all the mass information media."

Answering a reporter's question about whether it will be possible to restore peace and whether the spark of interethnic war will come to Russia, Yeltsin says: "In the first place, this is one of the tasks of my trip and meeting with the Georgian Republic Supreme Soviet Chairman. In the second place, it is simply that the situation as it is now can no longer continue. What is taking place is a civil war, albeit a mini civil war, and it is literally under way between individual groups of the population. It is therefore essential to restore order there. It is our view that this kind of joint militia detachment and a detachment, I mean, of the Russian Federation and the Georgian Republic Ministries of internal affairs is being set up, along the lines of UN troops, although not on such a scale of course, and it ought to bring back order, I think. Both ministers were here and they, too, gave assurances that they are capable of disarming people and putting this region right and keeping order until peace and calm have fully returned.

The video now shows Yeltsin walking in the company of men. The caption reads: The town of Nazran, Checheno-Ingushskaya SSR. There is a crowd seen attending the rally. A slogan reads: "We do not want another Karabakh!" Another slogan reads; "Give us back our motherland!" An unidentified speaker next to Yeltsin calls on those present to remember what the situation is like and to help democracy find its feet, because "Democracy in Russia is the main barrier against the totalitarian communist system".

Yeltsin then begins to speak: "Yes, our country is ill. Yes, Russia is ill. We have a political crisis. We have an economic crisis. We have a social crisis. We have a spiritual, moral crisis. We have an ethnic crisis. Our country has found itself in the grip of fires. The interethnic strife among the union republics has reached such proportions that there is bloodshed here. We must adopt all conceivable measures to prevent it. If we allow the South Ossetian blood, this flame, to come to the Kavkazskiy Khrebet, here and to envelope the Russian Federation, to envelope Russia, neither nations, nor our children or grandchildren, or our grandchildren's children would forgive us for this. We must not allow this to happen. The main thing for us today is, I think, that Russia should not be torn to pieces. If everyone pulls to his side, only fragments of Russia will remain. Well, it is this that we can not permit to happen. I ask for support on this, for our policy. from the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet." Those attending the rally applaud. There is a capacity crowd, people are shown standing on roofs and balconies.

Reports Continue on Georgia's Ossetian Crisis

Refugee Numbers Increase

*PM2703171191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
27 Mar 91 Second Edition p 8*

[TASS report under general heading: "South Ossetia: Shooting and Atrocities"]

[Text] That the situation in the region of the interethnic conflict remains extremely tense is also borne out by reports received by a TASS correspondent at the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs press center. According to preliminary reports, as a result of the Georgian thugs' 24 March attack on a number of Znaurskiy Rayon villages 85 houses abandoned by Ossetian families were looted and burned down. Virtually the entire Ossetian population has left the villages of Tsnelisi, Veleti, and Prinevi. Some of the refugees are arriving in Tskhinvali.

In Veleti village, where over half the houses have been burned down, five people of Georgian nationality have been arrested. Weapons, ammunition, and some of the looted property were confiscated from them. The charred body of an elderly woman was discovered in one house.

Today the population center of Khelucha, Tskhinvalskiy Rayon, has suffered the same fate as Veleti. Only ashes remained here after an attack by the thugs.

Situation 'Exacerbated'

*LD2703193791 Moscow TASS in English 1814 GMT
27 Mar 91*

[By TASS correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz March 27 TASS—The situation in South Ossetia has exacerbated. Intensive shooting is reported in the outskirts of Tskhinvali. Armed clashes involving automatic fire continue in far-off Ossetian and Georgian villages of South Ossetia.

TASS was told at the press centre of the extraordinary committee under the Supreme Soviet of Northern Ossetia that armed Georgian militants are still concentrated around Tskhinvali. They have blocked all roads used to convey humanitarian aid from various regions of the Soviet Union to the besieged city. The situation with foodstuffs and medicine remains critical in Tskhinvali. Bread, flour, and medicine are delivered by helicopters.

According to information of the Northern Ossetian Interior Ministry, armed Georgian pickets occupy more than 30 settlements in the region, from where all Ossetian population has been evicted. Last night armed clashes of conflicting sides were reported in villages of the Znaur region. There are killed and wounded. The flood of refugees from Ossetian villages in Georgia to Northern Ossetia is rising. Children, women and old men are arriving here every day. According to official data in Vladikavkaz, more than 15,000 people have been registered.

Tbilisi March 27 TASS—According to SAKINFORM correspondent Eduard Ediberidze, "The situation was calm in Tskhinvali and outlying villages today. There have been no shooting for the sixth day now in this region, where a state of emergency was declared by the Georgian Supreme Soviet. There is a clear trend towards a stabilisation of the situation".

Media Reports Termed 'Slanderous'

AU2703180991 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Russian 1530 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Text] It is already the sixth day since firing stopped in Tskhinvali and neighboring villages. A trend toward stabilizing the situation in the region has clearly taken shape. However, certain forces do not seem to like the cessation of bloodshed or the establishment of peace in Samachablo [South Ossetia]. This can be confirmed by the information TASS reported on the Central Television Program "Vremya" on 26 March to the effect that the Georgian Interior Ministry Press Center's statement on the cessation of shooting in Tskhinvali and neighboring villages over the last few days, did not reflect the real situation. Allegedly, the blockade of Tskhinvali is continuing, the blood of innocent people is being shed, and the number of refugees is growing. Such information was supplied to TASS and Central Television by the Committee on the Emergency Situation [Komitet po Chrezvychaynomu Polozheniyu] and by the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the North Ossetian [Autonomous] Soviet Socialist Republic who has been passing false information on Tskhinvali to the central press, radio, and television. [Passage indistinct] the slanderous information by the central media is continuing. In connection with the 26 March program "Vremya," the military commandant of Tskhinvali, Colonel of the Interior Ministry troops [name indistinct], protested against the spreading of slander. [passage indistinct] Those who do not believe that there has been no shooting or fires in Tskhinvali over the past days may go there and see for themselves that it is true. [passage indistinct]

'Contradictory' Reports Noted

LD2703232291 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 27 Mar 91

[Interview with USSR People's Deputy G.A. Chohkoyev by correspondent Sergey Suntsov; place and date not given; from the "Vremya" newscast—recorded]

[Text] [Announcer] Yesterday, a large rally took place in Tshinvali. Its participants expressed displeasure with a statement by the chairman of Georgia's Supreme Soviet alleging the recognition by the chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet of the liquidation of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast.

[Begin video recording] [Suntsov] Anatoliy Georgiyevich, we are getting contradictory reports from South Ossetia. What is your appraisal of the present situation in South Ossetia?

[Chokhoyev] The thing is that when we get information that shooting has ceased in South Ossetia, this refers to the city of Tshinvali where right now there indeed is, let us say, less shooting. But in the countryside it has really become difficult now. Altogether, over two days, four villages were burned down, 91 houses. Well, you can understand that in the mountains that is a great deal, our villages are small. Shooting is continuing there, the blockade is continuing as before.

[Suntsov] Representatives of South Ossetia's intelligentsia have more than once appealed to the country's supreme soviets—the Russian, to the Georgian, to the CPSU Central Committee for assistance, for intervention. Recently, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, chairman of Russia's Supreme Soviet, went on a trip to the area. How do you appraise the fact of the trip itself?

[Chokhoyev] Well, first of all I would say that indeed there are a great many appeals, and when I meet my fellow countrymen, my voters, they show great bewilderment. Why has the center so far not taken any steps. There is a real civil war going on, but no steps are being taken.

As far as Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's trip is concerned, frankly I expected it would be a good trip, at least for my people. The protocol that was signed in Kazbek by him and by Gamsakhurdia makes us seriously stop and think. I had been firmly convinced that prior to starting any kind of negotiations with (?greater) Georgia, as one of the first conditions Boris Nikolayevich would raise the question of restoring the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast. Regrettably, the protocol says that he in fact also recognizes it as the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, that is, he recognizes the decision of the Georgian Republic as lawful.

[Suntsov] What does this mean?

[Chokhoyev] Well, this means that first, we are not simply talking about what we are to be called, we are talking about the preservation of language, the preservation of culture, the preservation Ossetian autonomy. Today that is what guarantees our rights. What worries us is the fact that Boris Nikolayevich went and compromised, as they say, and in fact he started to play into the hands of the Georgian leadership when they recorded a separate point demanding that troops, units of the Soviet

Army be withdrawn from the territory of South Ossetia. That, probably, is an unacceptable solution.

We are very concerned that when we said that the refugees should be returned to their places of residence, Boris Nikolayevich should have known the situation in the autonomous oblast. Right now a scorched earth tactic is being pursued there.

[Suntsov] But the protocol says that the governments of Russia and Georgia should provide financial assistance.

[Chokhoyev] Today the losses are already estimated to be of the order of 350 million rubles, and that is according to very conservative estimates. Neither the RSFSR nor especially the Georgian Republic can allocate such resources for us. Yesterday in Tshinvali there were rallies at which it was again unequivocaly stated that if today anyone indeed wants to reduce the tension in South Ossetia, then first of all the issue of separating the opposing sides has to be resolved. A state of emergency has to be introduced for this throughout the oblast territory.